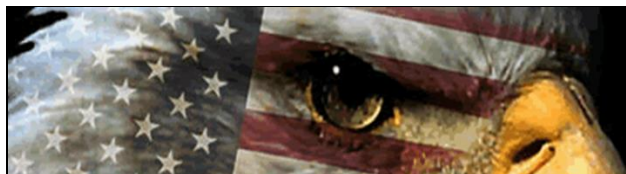



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HEADLINE	01/27 Memphis braces for protests
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/us/memphis-braces-video-fatal-police-encounter-with-black-motorist-2023-01-27/

GIST

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Jan 27 (Reuters) - The police department in the city of Memphis was set on Friday to release body-camera video of a violent confrontation between a Black motorist and five police officers charged with murder in his death earlier this month.

In a Tennessee grand jury indictment returned on Thursday, the five officers, all Black, were each charged with second-degree murder, assault, kidnapping, official misconduct and official oppression in the death of Tyre Nichols, a 29-year-old father.

Nichols succumbed to injuries he sustained from his encounter with police and died while hospitalized on Jan. 10, three days after he was pulled over while driving.

Police have been highly opaque about the circumstances of the arrest. Even Shelby County District Attorney Steve Mulroy, who sought the indictment, described the incident in vague terms when announcing the charges.

After Nichols was pulled over, "an altercation" ensued in which officers doused him with pepper spray, and Nichols tried to flee on foot, Mulroy said. "There was another altercation at a nearby location at which the serious injuries were experienced by Mr. Nichols."

Nichols' death marked the latest in a spate of high-profile cases of police officers accused of using excessive force in the deaths of Black people and other minorities in recent years, sparking public outcries against systematic racism in the U.S. criminal justice system.

Protests against racial injustice erupted globally following the May 2020 murder of George Floyd, a Black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer knelt on his neck for more than nine minutes, after he was arrested on suspicion of trying to pass a counterfeit bill.

The video to be released on Friday evening is expected to include footage captured by body-worn cameras, cameras mounted on dashboards of police vehicles and security cameras on utility poles in the vicinity.

The few individuals who viewed the video before its release and spoke to the media on Thursday did not characterize it in detail but said they found it disturbing.

David Rausch, director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, told reporters he was sickened by what he saw.

"What happened here does not at all reflect proper policing," he said. "This was wrong. This was criminal."

NICHOLS CALLED FOR HIS MOTHER

Civil rights lawyer Ben Crump, representing Nichols' family, compared it the 1991 videotaped beating of Black motorist Rodney King by four police officers whose acquittal of criminal charges the following year sparked several days of riots in Los Angeles.

"This young man lost his life in a particularly disgusting manner that points to the desperate need for change and reform to ensure this violence stops occurring during low-threat procedures, like in this case, a traffic stop," Crump and colleague Antonio Romanucci said in a statement.

The last words heard on the video were Nichols calling out for his mother three times, Crump said.

An official autopsy in the case has yet to be completed.

But Romanucci said in a CNN interview on Thursday that a medical examination commissioned by the family found Nichols was severely beaten.

"The results indicate that what we saw in the video are consistent with a severe beating, and our independent medical examiner has authorized us to quote that the injuries are consistent with a severe beating, meaning that the hemorrhage that was found was so deep that it could only be caused by blunt force trauma," Romanucci said.

All five officers - Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin III, Desmond Mills, Jr., and Justin Smith - were fired from the police force on Jan. 21 after an internal investigation found they breached multiple departmental policies, including use of excessive force.

Two members of the Memphis Fire Department involved in the response have been relieved of their duties pending a separate inquiry.

PUBLIC OUTRAGE EXPECTED

Additional Memphis police officers remain under investigation for policy infractions, Police Chief Cerelyn Davis said on Thursday in a message posted to YouTube.

Davis said she anticipated those seeing the footage "to feel outrage" but appealed for calm.

"I expect our citizens to exercise their First Amendment right to protest, to demand action and results, but we need to ensure our community is safe in this process," she said.

None of the former officers was available for comment. But attorneys for Martin and Mills said they were still developing their legal defenses, and their clients were posting bond to be released from jail on Thursday.

Blake Ballin, a lawyer for Mills, said his client was "devastated to find himself charged with a crime." Ballin also said it might be another two weeks before the defendants make their initial court appearances.

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HEADLINE	01/27 Fighting intensifies in east Ukraine
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-unleashes-missiles-drones-ukraine-after-kyiv-secures-tanks-11-dead-2023-01-26/
GIST	<p>KYIV, Jan 27 (Reuters) - Russia has stepped up attempts to break through Ukraine's defences with heavy fighting in the north and east of the country, underlining Kyiv's need for more Western weapons, Ukrainian officials said on Friday.</p> <p>The Ukrainian military said fierce battles were under way, a day after Russian missiles and drones killed at least 11 people in what appeared to be a response to promises by Western nations to supply Ukraine with tanks.</p> <p>After weeks of wrangling, Germany and the United States have promised Ukraine dozens of modern tanks to help push back Russian forces, opening the way for Canada, Poland, Finland, Norway and others to follow suit.</p> <p>Russia accused the United States of "pumping weapons into Ukraine" and chided President Joe Biden, saying he held the key to ending the conflict in Ukraine - which Moscow says does Washington's bidding - but had not used it.</p> <p>Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy thanked allies for their support but renewed calls for tougher sanctions on Moscow and more weapons to repel the invaders in the twelfth month of the war.</p> <p>"This evil, this Russian aggression can and should be stopped only with adequate weapons. The terrorist state will not understand anything else," Zelenskiy said in his nightly television address on Thursday.</p>

Local officials on Friday reported heavy shelling in the north, northeast and east of Ukraine, scene of some of the heaviest combat since Russia's invasion on Feb. 24 last year.

"Fierce fighting continues along the front lines. Our defenders are firmly holding their positions and inflicting losses to the enemy," said Oleh Synehubov, governor of the northeastern region of Kharkiv.

Reuters could not verify battlefield reports.

PROBING ATTACKS

Front lines have been largely frozen over the past two months, with Russia trying to gain ground in the east after occupying swathes of territory there and protect a corridor of land it has seized in southern Ukraine.

Both sides are widely expected to launch a spring offensive though the United States has publicly advised Ukraine against doing so until the latest weapons are in place and training has been provided -- a process expected to take several months.

Oleskandr Musiyenko, head of the Military and Strategic Research Centre of Ukraine, said Russia was sending in more reinforcements, mainly conscripts, to block Ukrainian advances.

"But they do not have the level of artillery and tank support they had on Feb. 24," Musiyenko told Ukrainian television.

Britain said in an intelligence update that Russian forces had probably conducted probing attacks near Orikhiv in southeastern Ukraine and in Vuhledar in the east, but were unlikely to have achieved "substantive advances."

Russian forces are intensifying the fight along the eastern front line, using their recent capture of the town of Soledar to build pressure on the besieged city of Bakhmut nearby where Ukrainians have held back an onslaught for months.

"Where will the main (Russian) strike occur? For now, we have no idea," said Mykola Sunhurovskiy, director of military programmes at Ukraine's Razumkov Centre think tank, warning of possible "diversionary strikes" to confuse Ukraine's military.

CHILDREN DEPORTED

Russia's invasion has killed thousands of civilians, uprooted millions and reduced cities to rubble.

Thursday's missile and drone strikes were the latest in a series of Russian attacks on energy facilities that have depriving millions of people of heating, light and water.

Ukraine also accuses Moscow of deporting children as well as adults from occupied areas and giving them Russian passports, actions condemned by the U.N.'s refugee agency (UNHCR).

"Giving them (Russian) nationality or having them adopted goes against the fundamental principles of child protection in situations of war," UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi told Reuters after touring Ukraine. "This is something that is happening in Russia and must not happen."

Kyiv's allies have imposed several rounds of sanctions on Russia, hoping to hinder its ability to wage war.

Japan tightened sanctions against Russia on Friday, expanding an export ban list and freezing assets of Russian officials and entities.

But Ukraine's hopes that the European Union will impose sanctions affecting nuclear energy were dealt a blow by Hungary, which said that it would veto such moves. Hungary has a Russian-built nuclear plant which it plans to expand.

	<p>The United States also increased pressure on Russia on Thursday by designating the Wagner Group, a private Russian mercenary company, as a transnational criminal organisation, freezing its U.S. assets for helping Russia's military.</p> <p>The Kremlin brushed off the decision, saying Washington had been "demonising" the group for years without basis.</p> <p>Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has meanwhile been visiting Africa to shore up support for Moscow. His latest stop on a tour that began in South Africa was in Eritrea.</p> <p>Russia has shifted the focus of its rhetoric from "denazifying" and "demilitarising" Ukraine to confronting what it says is an aggressive and expansionist U.S.-led NATO alliance. Ukraine and the West say the invasion on Feb. 24, 2022 was an unprovoked act of aggression.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 DA: 5 Memphis cops 'all responsible'
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/tyre-nichols-police-officers-charged-48d48f2137a2f34482274edb1bd1bab2?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=TopNews&utm_campaign=position_03
GIST	<p>MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Five fired Memphis police officers were charged Thursday with murder and other crimes in the killing of Tyre Nichols, a Black motorist who died three days after a confrontation with the officers during a traffic stop.</p> <p>Shelby County District Attorney Steve Mulroy told a news conference that although the officers each played different roles in the killing, “they are all responsible.”</p> <p>The officers, who are all Black, each face charges of second-degree murder, aggravated assault, aggravated kidnapping, official misconduct and official oppression.</p> <p>Video of the Jan. 7 traffic stop will be released to the public sometime Friday evening, Mulroy said. Nichols’ family and their lawyers said the footage shows officers savagely beating the 29-year-old FedEx worker for three minutes in an assault that the legal team likened to the infamous 1991 police beating of Los Angeles motorist Rodney King. His family urged supporters to protest peacefully.</p> <p>Nichols’ stepfather, Rodney Wells, told The Associated Press by phone that he and his wife, RowVaughn Wells, who is Nichols’ mother, discussed the second-degree murder charges and are “fine with it.” They had sought first-degree murder charges.</p> <p>“There’s other charges, so I’m all right with that,” he said.</p> <p>Asked about the kidnapping charges, the district attorney said: “If it was a legal detention to begin with, it certainly became illegal at a certain point and was an unlawful detention.”</p> <p>David Rausch, director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, said he saw the video and found it “absolutely appalling.”</p> <p>“Let me be clear: What happened here does not at all reflect proper policing. This was wrong. This was criminal,” Rausch said during the news conference.</p> <p>Court records showed that all five former officers — Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Desmond Mills Jr., Emmitt Martin III and Justin Smith — were taken into custody.</p>

Martin's lawyer, William Massey, confirmed that his client had turned himself in. He and Mills' lawyer, Blake Ballin, said their clients would plead not guilty. Lawyers for Smith, Bean and Haley could not be reached.

"No one out there that night intended for Tyre Nichols to die," Massey said.

Both lawyers said they had not seen the video.

"We are in the dark about many things, just like the general public is," Ballin said.

Second-degree murder is punishable by 15 to 60 years in prison under Tennessee law.

Later Thursday, Nichols' mother and stepfather were joined by several dozen supporters on a cold night for a candlelight vigil and prayer service at a Memphis skate park. Nichols, who had a 4-year-old son, was an avid skateboarder.

RowVaughn Wells thanked those who attended, then added that her family is "grief stricken."

She warned supporters of the "horrific" nature of the video set to be released Friday, but she pleaded with supporters to "protest in peace."

"I don't want us burning up our city, tearing up the streets, because that's not what my son stood for," she said. "If you guys are here for me and Tyre, then you will protest peacefully. You can get your point across but we don't need to tear up our cities, people, because we do have to live in them."

Activists and clergy led the group in prayer and a drummer played a steady rhythm to lead into the spoken part of the vigil. Afterwards, skaters rode their boards as Wells and her husband watched.

The attorneys for Nichols' family, Ben Crump and Antonio Romanucci, issued a statement saying that Nichols "lost his life in a particularly disgusting manner that points to the desperate need for change and reform to ensure this violence stops occurring during low-threat procedures, like in this case, a traffic stop."

The Rev. Al Sharpton, who runs the National Action Network and will deliver the eulogy at Nichols' funeral service next week, called the charges "a necessary step in delivering justice" for Nichols.

"There is no point to putting a body camera on a cop if you aren't going to hold them accountable when the footage shows them relentlessly beating a man to death," Sharpton said. "Firings are not enough. Indictments and arrests are not convictions. As we've done in the past ... we will stand by this family until justice is done."

At the White House, President Joe Biden said the Nichols family and the city of Memphis deserve "a swift, full and transparent investigation."

"Public trust is the foundation of public safety, and there are still too many places in America today where the bonds of trust are frayed or broken," Biden said in a statement.

The Memphis police chief has called the officers' actions that night "heinous, reckless and inhumane."

"This is not just a professional failing. This is a failing of basic humanity toward another individual," Memphis Police Director Cerelyn "CJ" Davis said in a video statement released late Wednesday on social media.

Davis said the five officers found to be "directly responsible for the physical abuse of Mr. Nichols," were fired last week, but other officers are still being investigated for violating department policy. In addition,

she said “a complete and independent review” will be conducted of the department’s specialized units, without providing further details.

Two fire department workers were also removed from duty over the Nichols’ arrest.

As state and [federal investigations](#) continue, Davis promised the police department’s “full and complete cooperation” to determine what contributed to Nichols’ Jan. 10 death.

[Mulroy told The Associated Press on Tuesday](#) that local and state investigators wanted to complete as many interviews as possible before releasing the video. The timetable has rankled some activists who expected the video to be released after Nichols’ family and the family’s lawyers viewed it Monday.

Crump said the video showed that Nichols was shocked, pepper-sprayed and restrained when he was pulled over near his home. He was returning home from a suburban park where he had taken photos of the sunset.

Police have said Nichols was stopped for reckless driving and at some point fled from the scene.

Relatives have accused the police of causing Nichols to have a heart attack and kidney failure. Authorities have only said Nichols experienced a medical emergency.

When video of the arrest is publicly released, Davis said she expects people in the community to react, but she urged them to do so peacefully.

“None of this is a calling card for inciting violence or destruction on our community or against our citizens,” she said.

One of the officers, Haley, was accused previously of using excessive force. He was named as a defendant in a 2016 federal civil rights lawsuit while employed by the Shelby County Division of Corrections.

The plaintiff, Cordarlrius Sledge, stated that he was an inmate in 2015 when Haley and another corrections officer accused him of flushing contraband. The two officers “hit me in the face with punches,” according to the complaint.

A third officer then slammed his head to the ground, Sledge said. He lost consciousness and woke up in the facility’s medical center.

The claims were ultimately dismissed after a judge ruled that Sledge had failed to file a grievance against the officers within 30 days of the incident.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Iran warships arrive in Brazil
SOURCE	https://freebeacon.com/national-security/us-monitoring-iranian-bid-to-establish-military-presence-in-panama-canal/
GIST	<p>The State Department said on Tuesday that it is monitoring "Iran's attempts to have a military presence in the Western Hemisphere," putting the Biden administration in an increasingly difficult position as it balances anti-regime protests, Iranian military escalation, and collapsing diplomacy over a revamped nuclear deal.</p> <p>A State Department spokesman told the <i>Washington Free Beacon</i> that it is tracking a recent announcement by the commander of Iran’s navy indicating that warships will establish a presence in the Panama Canal as soon as next month. Already, two Iranian warships—including one equipped with "anti-ship cruise missiles, torpedoes, and naval cannons"—were granted permission to dock in Brazil earlier this week, according to documents published by the Brazilian Navy.</p>

"We are aware of these claims by Iran's navy," the State Department spokesman told the *Free Beacon*. "We continue to monitor Iran's attempts to have a military presence in the Western Hemisphere." The official would not preview any potential action the Biden administration may take in response, or answer questions about how it views Iran's growing military presence in Latin America.

Iran's increasing influence in Latin America poses a unique problem for the Biden administration as it navigates diplomacy in the region amid a growing number of dictatorships that view an alliance with Tehran as beneficial. Venezuela, for instance, recently inked a massive foreign policy agreement with the Iranian government that will see Tehran increasing its role in the country's lucrative energy sector. Iranian vessels have more frequently voyaged into the Latin American region, and this month's announcement by the Iranian Navy indicates the hardline regime is seeking to protect its interests with force.

Iran has posed a challenge for President Joe Biden since he entered office with the goal of negotiating a revamped version of the 2015 nuclear deal. Since that time, Iran has increased its global terrorism operations, including those targeting American interests. Now, with anti-government protests gaining momentum, the Biden administration has refused to admit diplomatic defeat and continues to try to cajole the hardline regime into rejoining the nuclear pact, which will provide it with billions of dollars in cash windfalls and solidify its grip on power.

The latest military announcement marks a major escalation by Tehran's war forces to establish a military threat in America's backyard, with the help of anti-American dictatorships in Latin America. It also sets up a potential showdown with the Biden administration, which is already being pressured to take action.

Joseph Humire, a national security analyst who focuses on Latin American issues as executive director of the Center for a Secure Free Society [think tank](#), said that with Iranian war ships already docked in Brazil, the Biden administration has an opportunity to sanction Tehran's Latin American networks.

"The Iranian warships ported in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, are about one to two weeks away or more from entering the Canal Zone, giving the Biden administration time to leverage and enforce U.S. sanctions," Humire said. "Integrated deterrence, which is the defense posture of the Biden administration, requires 'integration across the spectrum of conflict to prevent competitors from altering the status quo in ways that harm U.S. vital interests.'"

Iran, Humire explained, "is literally testing the waters for further provocations in the near future. This cannot be allowed. And our defense posture is designed to deal with this."

The two Iranian warships are expected to depart Brazil on Jan. 30 and head to Venezuela before entering the Panama Canal around Feb. 7, when President Joe Biden will be delivering his State of the Union address, [according](#) to Humire.

Iranian rear admiral Shahram Irani, the commander of Iran's navy, said in recent remarks that the placement of warships in the Panama Canal is part of an effort by Iran to "strengthen our maritime presence in international waters." Irani indicated that Iran's navy is prepared for the long voyage and that "there is no scientific barrier to grow in that field."

Iran's footprint in the region has steadily grown for decades, bolstered by the hardline regime's alliance with Russia and China—which also have prioritized relations with Latin American countries they see as a counterweight to U.S. influence in the region. Iran has helped Hezbollah, the Lebanese armed resistance group, increase ties with regional drug cartels that smuggle weapons and arms across Latin America.

Amid this growing threat in America's backyard, Iran also says that it could take steps to shut down the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping lane in the Persian Gulf that is frequently the site of scuffles between the U.S. military and Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the country's paramilitary fighting force.

	<p>The State Department spokesman told the <i>Free Beacon</i> that Iran's parliament is considering a measure that would restrict European commercial movement through the shipping lane. This would mark a major deterioration in ties between Europe and Iran as the European Union's own parliament debates whether it will designate the IRGC as a terror group.</p> <p>"We are aware of this discussion among some members of Iran's Majles," the State Department spokesman said, referring to Iran's parliament. The official would not preview any potential reaction by the United States if Iran follows through on this threat.</p> <p>Mohammad Hassan Asfari, vice chairman of the Internal Affairs and Councils Commission in Iran's parliament, said the decision to block the Strait of Hormuz is meant as payback for Europe's tough line on the IRGC.</p> <p>"We will definitely not remain silent either," Asfari was quoted as saying earlier this week in Iran's state-controlled press. "Closing the Strait of Hormuz is on the agenda of the parliament."</p> <p>"If the Europeans are going to treat our armed forces and official forces like this, we will also put other options on the table, including restricting the traffic of European commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz," Asfari said.</p> <p>Iranian leaders also said on Tuesday that they will soon unveil new sanctions on the European Union and United Kingdom. These measures are also meant as payback for efforts in Europe to crack down on Iran's terrorism enterprise.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Putin prepares for new offensive
SOURCE	https://news.yahoo.com/putin-plans-ukraine-push-despite-050024422.html
GIST	<p>(Bloomberg) -- Nearly a year into an invasion that was supposed to take weeks, Vladimir Putin is preparing a new offensive in Ukraine, at the same time steeling his country for a conflict with the US and its allies that he expects to last for years.</p> <p>The Kremlin aims to demonstrate that its forces can regain the initiative after months of losing ground, putting pressure on Kyiv and its backers to agree to some kind of truce that leaves Russia in control of the territory it now occupies, according to officials, advisers and others familiar with the situation.</p> <p>Even Putin can't deny the weaknesses of the military that he's spent decades building up after his troops lost more than half their initial gains in Ukraine, the people said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss matters that aren't public. The persistent setbacks have led many in the Kremlin to be more realistic about their immediate ambitions, recognizing that even holding the current front line would be an achievement.</p> <p>But Putin remains convinced that Russia's larger forces and willingness to accept casualties – which already number in the tens of thousands, more than in any conflict since World War II, according to US and European estimates – will allow it to prevail despite the failings so far. The renewed offensive may start as soon as February or March, the people close to the Kremlin said. Their comments confirm warnings from Ukraine and its allies that a new Russian offensive is coming and suggest it may begin before Kyiv gets newly promised supplies of US and European battle tanks.</p> <p>Putin's determination presages another deadly escalation in his war as Kyiv prepares a new push of its own to eject his forces, dismissing any cease-fire that leaves Russia occupying its land. The Russian leader believes he has no alternative but to prevail in a conflict he sees as an existential one with the US and its allies, the people said. A new round of mobilization is possible as soon as this spring, they said, as the economy and society are increasingly subordinated to the needs of the war.</p>

“Putin is disappointed at how things are going but he isn’t ready to abandon his goals,” said Tatiana Stanovaya, founder of R.Politik, a political consultancy. “It just means that the route will be longer, more bloody and worse for everyone.”

US and European intelligence officials question whether Russia has the resources for a major new offensive, even after mobilizing 300,000 additional troops last fall. Ukraine’s allies, meanwhile, are stepping up weapons supplies, preparing to deliver armored vehicles and main battle tanks for the first time that could help Ukrainian troops break through Russian lines.

But Russia’s brutal, grinding attacks in places like Bakhmut, an eastern city that has limited strategic value, have worn down Ukrainian forces, diverting troops and sapping Kyiv’s ability to mount offensive operations elsewhere, according to US officials.

After lightning attacks by Ukrainian forces in the summer and fall breached its defensive lines, Russia has since stepped up protections, using trenches, tank traps and mines to slow any potential advance. Publicly, the Kremlin says there are no plans for more mobilization at present.

Longer term, Putin has approved plans to expand the ranks of the military by nearly 50% over the next few years, deploying new forces near Finland — which is in the process of joining NATO - and in the occupied regions of Ukraine. Schools and universities are reinstating military-training courses last conducted widely in the Soviet era as war preparations permeate society.

Still, some elements of realism about the disastrous performance of the military to date have begun to slip into tightly controlled state media.

“So far the results have been appalling because Russia wasn’t at all ready,” said Sergei Markov, a political consultant with close Kremlin ties.

“It’s morphed into a drawn-out war and Russia doesn’t yet have enough manpower or equipment to wage it,” he said. “We must stop the Ukrainian counter-offensive and thwart the West’s efforts to defeat us by gaining the military edge.”

Russian forces haven’t demonstrated the ability to do that since the early weeks of the invasion, retaking only one small city in the last six months and at a huge cost in casualties. Ukraine’s troops, by contrast, have consistently surprised allies and observers with their successes in pushing back the invaders.

Putin’s confidence in his military’s ability to grind out a triumph - even at a cost of vast casualties and destruction - reflects a misreading of the West’s commitment to turn back his aggression, some insiders concede. The US and its allies have steadily stepped up weapons supplies to categories once considered off-limits.

Still, US and European military officials fear the conflict could soon settle into a World War I-style artillery fight with largely stagnant front lines, a scenario that could come to favor Russia, with its larger population and military industry.

Diplomatically, Russia has sought to win supporters among non-western countries with appeals for talks on a cease-fire. Even people close to the Kremlin admit those are hopeless at present, given Ukraine’s demand that Russia pull out its troops as a condition for any deal.

The minimum the Kremlin would accept would be a temporary truce that left Russia in control of the territory its forces currently hold in order to win time to rebuild its forces, the people said. Though short of the boundaries of the regions that Putin illegally annexed in September, that would still leave Russia with a large swath of land, linking the areas it occupied before the war. As a result, the idea is a nonstarter with Kyiv and its allies.

	<p>“Unless something changes, we’re looking at a war of attrition like World War I, which could go for a long time because both sides believe time is on their side,” said Andrey Kortunov, head of the Kremlin-founded Russia International Affairs Council. “Putin is sure either the West or Ukraine will grow tired.”</p> <p>A re-election defeat in 2024 for US President Joe Biden, who has led the coalition to support Ukraine, might bring “more flexibility” on the issue in Washington, he said.</p> <p>While a new wave of sanctions pressure – in particular, the price cap imposed on Russian oil exports – has squeezed the Kremlin’s revenues, it hasn’t so far cut into Putin’s ability to finance the war. Russia still has access to billions in reserves in yuan which aren’t affected by sanctions and can help bridge budget shortfalls for as much as 2-3 years, according to economists.</p> <p>Among Ukraine’s allies, too, fears are growing that the conflict will last years.</p> <p>“This year it would be very, very difficult to militarily eject the Russian forces from all — every inch of Ukraine and occupied — or Russian-occupied Ukraine,” US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mark Milley said Jan. 20 after a meeting of US and allied defense ministers. “But I do think at the end of the day this war, like many wars in the past, will end at some sort of negotiating table.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/27 Putin pre-emptive strike plan exposed?
SOURCE	https://www.yahoo.com/news/putin-pre-emptive-strike-plan-091615646.html
GIST	<p>Russia is building up a network of fortifications and trenches along the front in Ukraine, in apparent anticipation of a new round of heavy fighting, according to satellite imagery analysis shared exclusively with The Daily Beast.</p> <p>The analysis from Brady Africk, an open-source intelligence analyst, shows that Russia is building up fortifications all along the front in Luhansk, from the Russian border down to Donetsk, and throughout Zaporizhzhia and Kherson.</p> <p>The satellite imagery indicates that Moscow may be on edge about a Ukrainian counteroffensive in the coming weeks—or may even be preparing its own offensive to try to seize more Ukrainian land, nearly one year into the war.</p> <p>“They’re trying to basically consolidate their gains and keep the parts that they’ve held on to thus far,” Africk, who works at the American Enterprise Institute, told The Daily Beast. “I think it’s definitely both a message to soldiers in Ukraine, and to everyone who might be watching, that they’re going to at least try and stay.”</p> <p>The recent buildup of fortifications—depicted in an interactive map created by Africk—could indicate Russian forces are worried about losing their hold in those regions, according to William Courtney, a former special assistant to the president for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia.</p> <p>“They are expecting counteroffensives, and they know that the West is going to be providing more and better equipment. They know that the West has already provided a lot of artillery which can be used to, if you will, blast away through fortifications,” Courtney told The Daily Beast. “The Russian purpose is to slow Ukraine down and try to stop it where it can,” said Courtney, now an adjunct senior fellow at the nonprofit RAND Corporation.</p> <p>An analysis from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) suggests Russia is preparing to be on defense as well.</p> <p>“Russian forces are clearly concerned to some degree about Ukrainian advances and they want to be able to secure these lines in case of Ukrainian advances,” Karolina Hird, Russia Analyst at the ISW, told The Daily Beast. “The type of defensive fortifications we’re seeing do suggest defensive intent.”</p>

Russia is currently using the cold winter months to regroup, retrain, re-equip, and prepare for next steps in the war after a series of losses to Ukrainian forces last year, according to a White House National Security Council assessment shared with reporters this week. The [United States, meanwhile, is helping Ukraine prepare to go on the counteroffensive against Russia](#), according to White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby.

“It’s about helping Ukraine defend itself, but also... helping Ukraine be able to go on the offense,” Kirby told reporters this week, in reference to current American aid to Ukraine.

Western nations finally settled on sending modern tanks to Ukraine to help fight Russia just this week after hesitation over fueling and other issues, in what could be a game-changer on the battlefield. President Joe Biden announced Wednesday that the United States would be sending Ukraine Abrams tanks, just as the German government made a similar announcement of its intentions to send Leopard tanks and allow other countries to send German-made tanks to Ukraine.

Some of the Russian fortifications appear primed to throw the Ukrainians off course in an onslaught and “make a Ukrainian advance very stop-and-start,” Africk said. “That’s kind of the main Russian goal—make it really, really, really hard and slow to advance and then use that to try and honestly stop Ukraine from launching counteroffensives.”

Russia has been working on trenches for months, but the latest developments show Russia doubling down and digging in. Compared to an analysis Africk completed earlier this month, the Russians have been adding fortifications in layers to those they had already established. And where there were gaps, the Russians have been constructing or setting up new fortifications, such as trenches and dragon’s teeth—a network of concrete triangles meant to block advances. The fortifications also include barriers, such as mounds that stretch for miles, and anti-tank ditches.

The fortification buildup is sweeping, but there are some areas that can provide clues as to Russia’s game plan. For example, Russia has added multiple layers of fortifications between Bakhmut, which Russian forces have been trying to seize for months now, and Popasna, which is Russian-controlled, according to the analysis.

It could be a sign that Russia is concerned with securing Bakhmut and the areas around it, particularly as Russian mercenary forces from [Wagner Group have tried and failed to seize Bakhmut](#). “That could feasibly be to protect the kind of Bakhmut front line,” Hird said.

Ukraine’s government has begun to acknowledge that Russian momentum is building there. Russian forces have been “increasing pressure” in the direction of Bakhmut, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in remarks this week, adding that they “want to increase pressure on a larger scale.”

The buildup could also be a sign that Russia is preparing an offensive itself, according to the Institute for the Study of War.

“Having strong fortified defensive lines also allows Russian forces to be able to potentially use these lines for launchpads for their own offensives... having that sort of security could hypothetically allow the development of a Russian offensive,” Hird said.

There are other indications from inside of Russia that the Kremlin might be preparing a major attack this year. President Vladimir Putin promoted Gen. Valery Gerasimov to his old role commanding Russian forces in Ukraine, in what some analysts see as a step in the direction of building up a more offensive posture. According to an analysis from Ukraine’s Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense, [Putin has already ordered Gerasimov to seize all of the Donbas](#), which includes several of the areas in question in the satellite imagery, by March.

The White House warned this week Russia is gearing up as well.

“You can expect that the Russians are going to pick up the tempo, we have to be ready for that and I know the Ukrainians are famous for that,” the National Security Council's Kirby told reporters this week.

Under Gerasimov’s leadership so far, Russia has begun to [shift towards more conventional troops](#), as opposed to private mercenary fighters from Wagner. Already, Moscow has been transferring Russian troops from training in Belarus to Luhansk, according to an analysis released Wednesday from the [Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine](#). Other divisions, including airborne forces, have also been deployed to the Svatove-Kreminna line, according to ISW.

A Luhansk offensive “would probably be from the Svatove-Kreminna line—the westward push in an attempt to regain territory in eastern Kharkiv Oblast and potentially northern Donetsk Oblast,” Hird said.

The imagery shows a concerted effort to construct fortifications northwest of Severodonetsk near Pryvillya. The Institute for the Study of War has also been observing activity nearby that could indicate Russia is preparing to either prevent Ukrainian advances into the Luhansk Oblast, or launch Russian forces westward.

“We also have been seeing that Russians may be preparing for some sort of decisive effort, either of defensive or offensive nature, in Luhansk Oblast, which we can kind of see by this very, very strong defensive line that runs all the way down the Luhansk Oblast border essentially, especially on the Svatove-Kreminna line,” Hird said.

The imagery could serve as a predictor for the battles to come throughout eastern Ukraine. The network of fortifications in Luhansk forms straight lines in a pattern “which suggests that the Russians here would like to just halt the Ukrainian offensive in place and hold that line,” Hird said.

In Kherson, the imagery shows a different arc in the story, with multiple layers of fortifications, which could suggest Russia anticipates a slower, perhaps piecemeal, progress.

The exact direction of a potential Ukrainian offensive might be impossible to predict for now. But the development of defensive barriers indicates Russia might be concerned about a Ukrainian onslaught that gets Kyiv closer to taking back Crimea, the Black Sea peninsula Russia illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

“The fortifications being built by Russia would appear to indicate they're worried about it,” Africk said.

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HEADLINE	01/27 Memphis police to release video
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/memphis-police-set-release-video-showing-fatal-beating-tyre-nichols-rcna67710
GIST	<p>Video of the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols, the 29-year-old man who died three days after a traffic stop by police, is set to be released by Memphis officials Friday evening.</p> <p>Nichols, 29, was hospitalized in critical condition and died three days after Memphis police officers stopped him Jan. 7. Details about what occurred between Nichols and the officers have been sparse; police initially said that Nichols fled on foot during the reckless driving stop and that a "confrontation" occurred in an effort to detain him.</p> <p>Nichols' family was offered a private viewing of the video Monday. His mother, RowVaughn Wells, made it only through the first minute, family attorneys Ben Crump and Antonio Romanucci said.</p> <p>The family has scheduled a news conference with its attorneys Friday to address recent developments in the case.</p>

"Our family is grief-stricken right now and this is very hard to swallow," Wells said at a candlelight vigil in Memphis' Tobey Park on Thursday night.

Wells warned of the contents of the video, called it "horrific," and asked people to protest in peace after its release. "I don't want us burning up our cities, tearing up the streets, because that's not what my son stood for," she said.

Romanucci described the video Monday as an "unadulterated, unabashed, nonstop beating" for three minutes. Crump has said it reminded him of "the Rodney King video," referring to the 1991 bystander video of [Los Angeles police officers beating a Black man](#).

"What we can tell you about the video: It is appalling, it is deplorable, it is heinous ... violent," Crump said. "And it's very troublesome on every level, because you have to ask yourself, yet again, we're seeing evidence of what happens to Black and brown people from simple traffic stops."

President Joe Biden said in a statement Thursday that Nichols' family deserves a "swift, full, and transparent investigation."

"Tyre's death is a painful reminder that we must do more to ensure that our criminal justice system lives up to the promise of fair and impartial justice, equal treatment, and dignity for all," Biden said.

He also urged that any protests in the coming days remain peaceful, acknowledging that "outrage is understandable."

Five officers involved in the case — Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin III, Desmond Mills Jr. and Justin Smith — [were fired last week](#) after an administrative investigation found they violated department policy on use of force.

All five officers [were charged](#) Thursday. Shelby County District Attorney Steve Mulroy told reporters their actions resulted in Nichols' death.

Mulroy said that after an "initial altercation" when "pepper spray was deployed," Nichols ran from the officers.

"There was another altercation at a nearby location, where serious injuries were experienced by Mr. Nichols," Mulroy continued. "After some period of time of waiting around afterward, he was taken away by an ambulance."

Martin, Smith and Bean were charged with second-degree murder, three counts of official misconduct, two counts of aggravated kidnapping and one count of acting in concert to commit aggravated assault, according to Shelby County Jail records.

Mills and Haley were charged with second-degree murder, two counts of official misconduct, two counts of aggravated kidnapping, one count of official oppression and one count of acting in concert to commit aggravated assault.

Two of the officers, Mills and Smith, posted \$250,000 bond and were released late Thursday. Haley, Martin and Bean had remained in custody Thursday night, jail records showed. But as of early Friday, morning, jail records showed that only Haley remained behind bars.

Multiple attempts to reach the officers for comment since they were fired were unsuccessful.

Attorneys for Mills and Martin did not immediately respond to requests for comment Thursday, and it was unclear whether the others have retained legal representation.

	<p>Police Chief C.J. Davis described the incident as "heinous, reckless and inhumane" in a video statement Wednesday night.</p> <p>"I expect you to feel what the Nichols family feels," she said. "I expect you to feel outrage in the disregard of basic human rights, as our police officers have taken an oath to do the opposite of what transpired on the video."</p> <p>Preliminary findings in an autopsy conducted by a forensic pathologist for Nichols' family show he was severely beaten before he died, the family's attorneys have said. The Shelby County medical examiner's office hasn't released an official cause of death.</p> <p>Nichols' case is being investigated by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations and the U.S. Justice Department, which launched a civil rights inquiry into the traffic stop.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/27 Israel retaliates; strikes Gaza militant sites
SOURCE	https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-64423267
GIST	<p>Israel has carried out air strikes on Gaza in response to rocket fire as tensions soar in the wake of a deadly army raid in the occupied West Bank.</p> <p>Six rockets were fired, reports from Israel say, with Israel attacking what it said were militant sites.</p> <p>There were no reports of injuries on either side.</p> <p>Militants warned of a response after nine Palestinians were killed in the Jenin raid, which Israel said was to thwart "imminent terrorist attacks".</p> <p>Two rockets were fired around midnight (22:00 GMT Thursday) but were intercepted by Israel's anti-rocket Iron Dome system, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said. Air strikes swiftly followed, targeting what the IDF said was an "underground rocket manufacturing site" in the central Gaza Strip belonging to the Islamist militant group Hamas, which governs the territory.</p> <p>A second salvo of rockets was fired hours later, landing in open ground, shot down or falling back down in Gaza, the military said. Israel subsequently hit a site which it said was "a significant centre of Hamas terrorist activities" in the northern Gaza Strip.</p> <p>No group admitted to firing the rockets, though Israel holds Hamas responsible for all attacks from Gaza.</p> <p>The overnight exchange followed the deadliest incident of its kind in years after Israeli forces entered the West Bank city of Jenin to arrest an Islamic Jihad "terror squad". The IDF said it was acting on "precise intelligence" about plans by the cell to attack Israelis.</p> <p>Forces surrounded a building in the city's urban refugee camp where an intense gun battle erupted. Israel said three armed suspects were "neutralised" after they opened fire, while a fourth suspect surrendered. The IDF said troops were shot at by other Palestinian gunmen and returned fire, hitting targets.</p> <p>The militant Palestinian Islamic Jihad group and Hamas said their fighters had targeted the troops with gunfire and improvised explosive devices.</p> <p>The Palestinian health ministry said two civilians, including a 61-year-old woman, were among those killed. Twenty people were also wounded, four of them seriously, it said.</p> <p>The Palestinian presidency accused Israel of a "massacre" and later announced it had ended co-ordination with Israel on security matters.</p>

	<p>A 10th Palestinian was meanwhile shot and killed during a confrontation with Israeli troops in the town of al-Ram, near Jerusalem, as residents protested against the Jenin raid, Palestinian officials said.</p> <p>At least 30 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces in the West Bank so far this year, including militants and civilians, as the military continues operations there.</p> <p>Last year in the West Bank more than 150 Palestinians were killed, nearly all by Israeli forces. The dead included unarmed civilians, militant gunmen and armed attackers.</p> <p>A series of attacks by Palestinians and Israeli Arabs targeting Israelis, as well as militant gunfire at troops during arrest raids, meanwhile killed more than 30 people including civilians, police and soldiers.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Shooting unmask poor living conditions
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2023/01/26/half-moon-bay-farmworkers/
GIST	<p>HALF MOON BAY, Calif. — When Joaquin Jimenez heard about gunshots on Highway 92, he immediately thought of the mushroom farm.</p> <p>Jimenez is the vice mayor of this scenic beach town south of San Francisco, but his day job as farmworker program director for a local nonprofit brought him into daily contact with the less glamorous side of the community, as he donated food and blankets to those who harvest vegetables in the network of family farms up and down the coast. And in his years providing help for this predominantly immigrant workforce, he said, the California Terra Garden mushroom farm stood out.</p> <p>“One of the worst,” he said.</p> <p>Monday afternoon’s mass killing — which left seven people dead at California Terra Garden and another nearby mushroom farm — was the latest in a series of problems, including a prior shooting, a destructive fire, and a multiday coronavirus outbreak in 2020, according to Jimenez and other officials with local social services charities who have been interviewing the farm’s employees since the shooting.</p> <p>At California Terra Garden, workers and their families lived in trailers on the property, cooked outdoors in makeshift kitchens, used portable toilets, and had their rent deducted from their paychecks, officials said. Yet even though aid groups had regularly visited the farm, sometimes multiple times per week, it took a rampaging gunman to expose more broadly the squalor that farmworkers can face even in one of the wealthier communities in the country.</p> <p>“The living conditions are deplorable, heartbreaking,” said Ray Mueller, a San Mateo County supervisor who toured the farm with law enforcement officials Thursday morning and later tweeted photos from the scene. “There’s modified [shipping] containers. It looks like there’s rooms where people are living where there’s no running water. Very little shelter from the elements. No one should be living there.”</p> <p>“We’re going to red tag it all,” he added. “No one’s going back to live in that place.”</p> <p>Police said the man charged with seven counts of murder in the shooting, 66-year-old Zhao Chunli, lived and worked at California Terra Garden. He previously had worked at the second shooting site, Concord Farms, about three miles away. Police called the massacre a case of “workplace violence.”</p> <p>Zhao was apprehended within hours of the shooting after he parked his SUV at the local sheriff’s office. The dead were described by the San Mateo Coroner’s Office as Asian or Hispanic workers from 43 to 74 years old.</p> <p>It was not the first shooting on the farm. On July 1, another worker fired a gun into one of its trailers, according to San Mateo County Chief Deputy District Attorney Sean Gallagher. The bullet passed through</p>

that trailer and lodged into the wall of another. The suspect, Martin Medina, is in custody on attempted murder charges, Gallagher said.

The occupant of the second trailer, Yetao Bing, 43, was killed in Monday's shooting.

California Terra Garden, which took over from previous operator Mountain Mushroom Farm last year, grows shiitake and oyster mushrooms in greenhouses tucked amid cypress and eucalyptus trees on a 150-acre property that it leases a couple of miles from the coast. An owner of the company, who drove onto the property in a silver BMW on Wednesday, gave his name as Jack Guan but declined to comment beyond saying of his company: "We grow and sell mushrooms."

A company spokesman, David Oates, disputed that living conditions were substandard. He said employees earn \$16.50 to \$24 an hour — above minimum wage — and pay \$300 monthly for rent. He said workers receive paid vacation, company-sponsored health insurance, worker compensation and access to a 401(k) retirement plan.

Oates added that the eight families who live on the property do so in state-inspected mobile homes and "large recreational vehicles." He said that photos taken at the site by Mueller depicted storage areas, not living quarters, although one appeared to show a mattress.

"All the living structures have indoor plumbing, bathrooms, shower facilities and kitchens," Oates said.

He added that there are "additional outside kitchen structures and port-a-potties for when there are large gatherings the families want to have."

The company has not allowed reporters to visit the farm. But San Mateo County officials who have toured the property said residents should not be living in such conditions.

"It's not something that's acceptable. It's not healthy. It's not safe," said Mike Callagy, the county executive officer for San Mateo. "This is an eye-opening experience."

He added that the owners have been cooperative with authorities.

"It's relatively new owners who really didn't have a full grasp of what was going on there, according to them. They know that now. And they understand that they've got to make changes," Callagy added. "We're the most expensive place in the country to live and these are the most vulnerable of the vulnerable; they're hit harder than anyone else."

Many farmworkers in California face a shortage of affordable housing, and employees often struggle with low pay and access to adequate housing and health care, according to experts who study them. Researchers at the UC Merced Community and Labor Center who surveyed more than 1,300 farmworkers found that the median wage for California farmworkers is \$21,915 a year and about half had access to health insurance.

After reviewing the photos from the mushroom farm, Irene de Barraicua, director of operations at Lideres Campesinas, a network of female farmworker leaders, described them as "very typical images ... for California and for the country."

Sometimes farm owners will say their workers are "like family," de Barraicua said, but "when you look at the living situations, you know they would not let their family live like that."

De Barraicua added that, particularly for foreign farmworkers, it's "very common" for part of their paychecks to be diverted toward rent paid to their employer.

"Many of them in a sense are sort of enslaved," de Barraicua said.

After the shooting, many of the farmworkers and their families were moved into the Quality Inn in Half Moon Bay. On Thursday, their children, some as young as 2 years old, received donated toys, including dolls and stuffed animals, while others kicked around soccer ball in the parking lot. The families — which include immigrants from Mexico, Guatemala and China — have been lining up for donated meals at tables outside the hotel lobby. Social service agencies, local officials, representatives from the Mexican Consulate and others have been on-site making services available for the group. It was unclear how long they would need to stay.

Christopher King, a nurse practitioner with the county health department who provided treatment this week to workers from the farms, said the trauma they'd experienced was evident.

"Everybody was pretty raw and you could see the fear in people's eyes," King said of his interactions with survivors Wednesday. King treated workers for upper respiratory infections, a bacterial stomach infection, anxiety, headaches and insomnia; helped with blood-pressure management; and provided medications.

He also noted that while there are Spanish-speaking practitioners on the county's team, none there spoke Mandarin, an extra barrier for some workers. "Due to language and cultural barriers, [the Mandarin-speaking farmworkers] are probably more removed from the ability to access health care than our Spanish-speaking population, and we want to bridge that gap moving forward," King said.

Most of the workers declined to comment about the shooting or their living conditions, and some said police instructed them not to talk. One worker said he had spent two years at the farm and it was his first job in the United States after migrating from Guatemala.

"I just know this place in the United States, it's the first time I've come," he said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to avoid the ongoing controversy. "I don't know restaurants, hotels, all of that. What little I know is on that farm."

Jimenez, the vice mayor, said he knew a lot about the farm from his work with the nonprofit ALAS, whose full title in Spanish means Helping Latinos to Dream. The charity visited the farm regularly, sometimes multiple times per week, to donate food, water, blankets, bicycles and other goods to the workforce. On the day of the shooting, an ALAS team had been there twice, bringing tarps to cover leaking trailers that had flooded during the recent rainstorms that battered the California coast.

"They were damaged. Water was dripping into the trailers. A lot of their items were ruined. Their mattresses got wet, blankets were wet. That's why the tarps were brought in for them, so they could put over their trailers," Jimenez said.

Mueller, the county supervisor, said he'd spoken to a worker Thursday who said "they were forced to sleep with water coming in during the storms."

"At first they tried to shovel it out with pans and then they gave up," he said.

Jimenez also knew the suspected shooter, Zhao, a longtime employee at the first shooting site and a former worker at the second.

Jimenez said that in addition to the earlier shooting at California Terra Garden, a homeless man and registered sex offender was found guilty of felony reckless burning in 2017 in a fire that damaged several greenhouses on the farm.

The farmworkers also suffered through the serious coronavirus outbreak in 2020, Jimenez said, that led the county to impose a quarantine on the staff for several days.

"In that farm everybody tested positive, including management," he said.

	<p>Jimenez said he knows many of the local farmworkers and worries that the aftermath of the shooting could leave them unemployed and homeless.</p> <p>“What they share with me, with us, when we visit, is like, ‘This is what we have right now. We don’t want to stay here for the rest of our lives, but we have a roof, we have a job,’ and we have to be able to respect that,” he said. “One of the workers that I know, joking around with me, he said, ‘You know, Joaquin, I’d rather be here, unless you want me to be in a tent by the creek.’</p> <p>“We are hoping for changes,” Jimenez said about the living and working conditions. “What I don’t want to happen is for people to go and become homeless. That’s what I worry about.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Atlanta activists not backing down
SOURCE	https://www.vice.com/en/article/dy7m3a/atlanta-activists-at-stop-cop-city-arent-backing-down-after-police-kill-protester
GIST	<p>The movement to stop the construction of a controversial police training facility in Atlanta gained international attention this past week, after sweeps of forest protest encampments resulted in dozens of arrests, terrorism charges, and the police killing of an activist.</p> <p>Members of Atlanta’s burgeoning “Stop Cop City” movement were rattled after Georgia state police shot and killed Manuel “Tortuguita” Teran, a 26-year-old queer environmental activist who had joined the protest encampment in Atlanta’s South River Forest. But the activists—some of whom were arrested and are now facing domestic terrorism charges and excessively high bail amounts—are showing no signs of backing down.</p> <p>Local organizations like Community Movement Builders, a Black-led nonprofit and mutual aid group which has mobilized with Stop Cop City and Defend the Atlanta Forest activists, have described the police’s actions as blatant attempts to derail the movement.</p> <p>“The high bail amounts and charges are a way to make an example of people so that others see themselves out of the movement,” Jasmine, an organizer with Community Movement Builders, told Motherboard. “Those things are a strategic choice to dissuade people from participating, [and] also to try to bleed resources from the movement. They’re trying to bleed the movement dry.”</p> <p>Since the summer of 2021, Atlanta’s forest defenders have held camp as part of a widespread local resistance to halt construction of a new state-of-the-art \$90 million police training facility, which locals call “Cop City.” The project plans to use 381 acres of dense woodland forest to build a massive mock city designed to train police in urban warfare. The plan has been widely opposed by local residents and environmental experts, who say it would cause extreme flooding in areas populated primarily by Black and brown residents.</p> <p>The shooting occurred last week after Georgia State Patrol and other law enforcement agencies entered the South River Forest to conduct a SWAT operation to clear forest encampments, part of the police’s escalating tactics to stifle the growing movement. Police say Teran refused to exit a tent and shot at the state troopers first—a claim that has been fiercely contested by protesters who knew Teran and were present during the sweep.</p> <p>That night, community members gathered in Atlanta to mourn and protest Teran’s killing, which has been described by organizers as a tragic culmination of events in Atlanta police repression. In the following days, activists around the globe, from Los Angeles to Lützerath, Germany, have joined Stop Cop City activists in their demands to save the forest, abolish the police, and vindicate Teran’s death, transforming Stop Cop City from a local movement to an international one almost overnight.</p> <p>Six people were arrested during the forest raid the morning Teran was killed. Fifteen others were arrested late that night during the evening’s protest of solidarity and mourning. Last weekend, four others were</p>

arrested during a protest in downtown Atlanta which resulted in property damage of a few businesses and a police car. This resulted in the second wave of domestic terrorism charges mounted against protesters and forest defenders, with five others arrested and charged in [December 2022](#).

In total, the state of Georgia is now planning to prosecute 18 people for domestic terrorism, all of whom are connected to the movement against the police training facility. The activists will also be among the first to be charged under the state's weighty 2017 [domestic terrorism statute](#), which carries a maximum sentence of 35 years in prison.

Local activists and legal experts have condemned the charges, and called for an independent investigation into the killing of Teran, which includes demands for the release of body cam footage. Atlanta Solidarity Fund, an organization that provides financial and legal resources to those arrested during protest, released a [statement](#) calling the domestic terrorism charges a "dangerous precedent, designed to stifle public opposition and scare anyone concerned about police militarization and climate change away from protesting."

The tactics on display are all-too-familiar, according to Lauren Regan, director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, a nonprofit legal movement organization that is offering legal representation to Atlanta protesters.

"In my 25 years of experience defending activists, it is unfortunately a recurrent type of state repression when a campaign like this one gains momentum and broad public support," Regan told Motherboard.

"We've seen this time and time again. Domestic terrorism statutes, false arrests, high bonds, escalated charges—all of these along with police brutality are things on the state repression menu. And you're seeing all of them in Atlanta right now."

Local authorities have also [made numerous claims](#) that Atlanta's forest defense movement, commonly known as Defend the Atlanta Forest, has been named by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as "domestic violent extremists." However, Regan told Motherboard those claims are false.

"We have heard authorities in Atlanta regularly make statements along the line that the [DHS] has classified the forest defense as a terrorist organization or a violent extremist organization," says Regan.

"That's not true. We have called and DHS does not classify individual groups. We keep seeing lies being made by government officials in order to attempt to justify this outrageous use of rhetoric against not-uncommon property crimes."

During a bail hearing for those arrested on Jan. 18, bail was denied for four arrestees while two others were granted bond at the unprecedented cost of \$355,000 each, along with bail conditions including ankle monitors and curfews, according to members of Atlanta Solidarity Fund who were [present for the hearing](#).

On Jan. 25, DeKalb County District Attorney Sherry Boston recused herself from the investigation that would uncover more details about Teran's death. Body cam footage has still not been released, with officials saying they did not have badge cams during the raid. Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr is now taking the lead in the domestic terrorism cases.

While activity in the forest has waned since Teran's killing, organizers have been pivoting to other means of resistance along with redoubling efforts taking place outside of encampments. Activists are demanding that prosecutors drop all charges against protesters and authorize an independent investigation of Teran's murder, and that city officials cancel the lease for Cop City with the Atlanta Police Foundation, and that corporations involved in Cop City divest from the project. They are also calling for continued national and international support, urging people outside of Atlanta to spread awareness and host events in their own communities to prevent what would be the largest police training facility in the U.S.

Mariah Parker, a local organizer and hip-hop artist, says that the Stop Cop City movement brings together multiple spheres of collective struggles being fought around the world.

“There can be no guessing that with this facility, they will be bringing in folks from police departments from across the country, other armed groups, and state agents around the world,” Parker told Motherboard, detailing how Stop Cop City is no longer just an Atlanta issue. “The money and support coming in [for Cop City] is coming from outside of Georgia. The offense is coming from all over the country. The city and police foundation had been mobilizing national forces, and so are we now, because we have to.”

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HEADLINE	01/26 Snohomish Co. settles deputy shooting suit
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/snohomish-county-pays-1-9m-to-settle-suit-over-deputys-killing-of-man-in-crisis/
GIST	<p>Snohomish County has agreed to pay \$1.93 million to settle a lawsuit filed by the wife of an emotionally troubled man fatally shot by a deputy after his family called police for help.</p> <p>The settlement was reached Jan. 20 following mediation between the family of Ryan Dean Hemmingson and the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office, marking the third time in recent years that the county has paid \$1 million or more to settle a lawsuit stemming from a deputy’s use of deadly force.</p> <p>Deputy Anthony Zayas shot Hemmingson three times after deputies forced their way into his wife’s apartment in response to a call about him wounding himself with a pocket knife — reportedly ignoring pleas by family members to let them help persuade him to surrender.</p> <p>Tom Mumford, an Everett attorney representing Valerie Egleston, Hemmingson’s wife, said the pocket knife was found under Hemmingson’s body, its blade folded.</p> <p>“This death was so unnecessary,” Mumford said Wednesday. “If they had just attempted to slow things down and to de-escalate this situation, Ryan Hemmingson would be alive today.”</p> <p>Zayas left the department in 2020 after he was charged with third-degree rape for having sex with a 14-year-old girl he met on the dating app Tinder, according to documents and news reports. He was acquitted of the charge in 2021 after testifying that the girl had misrepresented her age.</p> <p>According to court documents, the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office was called to Egleston’s apartment the evening of Nov. 9, 2019, after Egleston’s son, Nickolas Kelley, called 911 to report that Hemmingson, 44, had been drinking and stabbed himself with a pocket knife.</p> <p>Within four minutes, according to the lawsuit, Zayas and five other deputies arrived at the apartment, lining up outside with their firearms drawn.</p> <p>“Nickolas Kelley asked the deputies not to just barge into the house and requested that he be allowed to work with them to reason with Mr. Hemmingson in order to de-escalate the situation,” according to the lawsuit.</p> <p>“Mr. Kelley’s requests were ignored, he was rebuffed and was told to stay out of the way,” the pleadings said.</p> <p>The lawsuit said there was nothing in the 911 call indicating Hemmingson was dangerous or posed a threat to the deputies. His self-inflicted injury was superficial, according to court documents.</p> <p>Even so, five of the six deputies “placed themselves in a stacked formation” outside the apartment door with their sidearms drawn, while the sixth, identified as Deputy Brent Reid, called out to Hemmingson to surrender, telling him he was “not in trouble,” according to the pleadings.</p>

When Hemmingson didn't reply, Reid opened the unlocked front door, entered the apartment and continued to order him out of a back room "in an aggressive and authoritative tone," the lawsuit said. Hemmingson complied and walked toward the deputies, according to the documents.

"He did not verbally threaten the deputies," according to the pleadings. "In fact, he did not speak to them at all."

Even so, a deputy identified in the lawsuit as Jonathan Krajcar "fired several pepper balls at him, striking him repeatedly." That's when Zayas fired his service weapon, striking Hemmingson three times in the chest and abdomen.

"Mr. Hemmingson fell to the ground," the lawsuit said. "As he lay on the ground bleeding to death, the deputies ordered him to show his hands. Mr. Hemmingson replied, 'I'm trying.'"

Hemmingson was taken to a hospital, where he died in surgery, according to the lawsuit.

An internal investigation into the shooting cleared Zayas of wrongdoing. No criminal charges were filed.

The lawsuit claims Snohomish County's "training and policies are nonexistent and/or deficient in how to deal with individuals suffering from emotional, physical and mental impairments."

"The deputies actions ... were negligent, reckless, outrageous and deliberately indifferent to Mr. Hemmingson's civil rights," the lawsuit concluded. "They entered his home in an unreasonable manner, failed to de-escalate the situation, failed to listen to Mr. Kelley, and failed to gather additional information about the situation before taking lethal action."

Snohomish County has paid a total of \$4.68 million to three families to settle wrongful death and civil rights lawsuits resulting from killings by deputies.

In 2021, the county [paid \\$1.75 million to the family of Cecil Lacy Jr.](#), an unarmed Tulalip tribal member who died while struggling with deputies in 2015. In 2020, [the county paid \\$1 million to the family of Nickolas Michael Peters](#), a 24-year-old Edmonds man who was shot and killed after a car chase in 2018.

County prosecutors provided The Seattle Times with a copy of the settlement agreement in Hemmingson's death, outlining the \$1,937,500 payment to Egleston without admitting liability. The county offered no other comment, saying the agreement speaks for itself.

Egleston's lawsuit alleged civil rights violations, wrongful death, assault, outrage and wrongful hiring.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Economy growing but interest rates rising
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/jan/26/us-economy-gdp-2022-q4-interest-rates
GIST	<p>The US economy maintained a strong pace of growth in the fourth quarter as consumers boosted spending on goods, but momentum appears to have slowed considerably towards the end of the year, with higher interest rates eroding demand.</p> <p>Gross domestic product – the broadest measure of economic health – increased at a 2.9% annualized rate last quarter, the commerce department said in its advance fourth-quarter GDP growth estimate on Thursday. The economy grew at a 3.2% pace in the third quarter. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast GDP rising at a 2.6% rate.</p>

	<p>That could be the last quarter of solid growth before the lagged effects of the Federal Reserve's fastest monetary policy tightening cycle since the 1980s kick in. Most economists expect a recession by the second half of the year, though mild compared with previous downturns.</p> <p>Retail sales have weakened sharply over the last two months and manufacturing looks to have joined the housing market in recession. While the labor market remains strong, business sentiment continues to sour, which could eventually hurt hiring.</p> <p>Robust second-half growth erased the 1.1% contraction in the first six months of the year. For all for 2022, the economy expanded 2.1%, down from the 5.9% logged in 2021. The Fed last year raised its policy rate by 425 basis points from near zero to a 4.25%-4.50% range, the highest since late 2007.</p> <p>Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, was the main driver of growth, mostly reflecting a surge in goods spending at the start of the quarter. Spending has been underpinned by labor market resilience as well as excess savings accumulated during the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>But demand for long-lasting manufactured goods, which are mostly bought on credit, has fizzled and some households, especially lower-income, have depleted their savings. Business spending also lost some luster as the fourth quarter ended.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/27 China: Covid wave peaks; deaths fall
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/27/china-claims-covid-wave-has-peaked-with-severe-cases-deaths-falling-fast
GIST	<p>China's health authorities have said the Covid wave is past its peak, with rapid decline in both severe cases and deaths in hospitals, but experts remain wary of the government's official data.</p> <p>According to China's Center for Disease Control (CDC), the number of critically ill patients in hospital peaked in the first week of January, then rapidly declined by more than 70%. The number of deaths also reached its highest level that week, the data said.</p> <p>Prof Chi Chun-huei, director of the centre for global health at Oregon University, said local officials were incentivised – via punishments and rewards – to under-report infection figures during the zero-Covid policy. Now that policy was gone, they were incentivised to exaggerate infection rates and under-report deaths.</p> <p>“Most international experts know this very well – China's statistics are very unreliable,” he said.</p> <p>Covid cases have swept across China in recent months, escalating rapidly after the government suddenly ended its zero-Covid policy in early December 2022. Last week a senior health official said 80% of people had been infected in this wave, although it was not clear where the figures came from.</p> <p>According to the data, there were 128,000 critically ill Covid patients in Chinese hospitals on 5 January, the highest number reached during this wave. It described a peak inside hospitals over the western new year, with almost 10,000 new critically ill cases a day from 27 December to 3 January.</p> <p>By 23 January the total number of critically ill cases had dropped by 72% to about 36,000, it said.</p> <p>The number of deaths in hospitals reached their highest point on 4 January, with 4,273 recorded, before falling 79% by 23 January to 896.</p> <p>The CDC said the number of visits to fever clinics peaked at 2.867m on 23 December, before falling 96.2% to 110,000 on 23 January. A similar decline was observed in visits to rural clinics, with peaks around the same date, it said.</p>

The data, published on Wednesday, was based primarily on hospital in-patients, giving some insight into the severity of the outbreak, but external health experts and observers have cautioned that it only shows one part of the true toll.

China's wave of infections hit major cities first, and there has been concern that travel for lunar new year could spread infections into regional areas. Reporting from inside China has already found apparent high rates of infection and fatalities that appear to exceed official reports.

With the end of zero-Covid, travel restrictions, mass testing, mandatory quarantine and other measures were wound back or dropped entirely. Data collection systems quickly fell far behind the reality on the ground, with fewer than 60 deaths officially recorded in the first few weeks until authorities updated the way deaths are attributed.

The notice from the CDC acknowledged that PCR testing was not keeping up with infections. Daily tests had dropped to 280,000 by Monday, down from 150m on 9 December, and 7.54m on 1 January. Some provinces had enacted systems for collecting the results of residents or allowing residents to self-report, but the figures were "affected by the willingness of residents to test".

Previously several provinces or major cities had reported infection rates of 70-90%, but some analysts speculated such figures might have been over-inflated to suggest places were on the way to recovery.

Prof Antoine Flahault, director of the institute of global health at the University of Geneva, told the Guardian the figure of 80% total infection rate was "mostly plausible" and in line with global knowledge of Omicron's attack rate.

"Having said that, to transfer that to mortality figures is highly difficult."

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HEADLINE	01/26 Layoffs spread beyond tech giants
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/corporate-layoffs-spread-beyond-high-growth-tech-giants-11674743815?mod=hp_lead_pos1
GIST	<p>Dow Inc., International Business Machines Corp. and SAP SE joined the string of companies outlining plans to cut thousands of jobs to prepare for a darkening economic outlook even as the nation's labor market remains tight.</p> <p>The headline-grabbing expansion of layoffs beyond high-growth technology companies stands in contrast to historically low levels of jobless claims and news that companies such as Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. and Airbus SE are adding jobs.</p> <p>This week, four companies trimmed more than 10,000 jobs, just a fraction of their total workforces.</p> <p>Still, the decisions mark a shift in sentiment inside executive suites, where many leaders have been holding on to workers after struggling to hire and retain them in recent years when the pandemic disrupted workplaces.</p> <p>Unlike Microsoft Corp. and Google parent Alphabet Inc., which announced larger layoffs this month, these companies haven't expanded their workforces dramatically during the pandemic. Instead, the leaders of these global giants said they were shrinking to adjust to slowing growth, or responding to weaker demand for their products.</p> <p>"We are taking these actions to further optimize our cost structure," Jim Fitterling, Dow's chief executive, said in announcing the cuts, noting the company was navigating "macro uncertainties and challenging energy markets, particularly in Europe."</p>

The U.S. labor market broadly remains strong but has gradually lost steam in recent months. Employers added 223,000 jobs in December, the smallest gain in two years. The Labor Department will release January employment data next week.

Economists from Capital Economics estimate a further slowdown to an increase of 150,000 jobs in January, which would push job growth below its 2019 monthly average, the year before pandemic began.

There is “mounting evidence of weakness below the surface,” Andrew Hunter, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics wrote in a note to clients Thursday.

Last month, [the unemployment rate was 3.5%](#), matching multidecade lows. Wage growth remained strong, but had cooled from earlier in 2022. The Federal Reserve, which [has been raising interest rates](#) to combat high inflation, is looking for signs of slower wage growth and easing demand for workers.

Many CEOs say companies are beginning to scrutinize hiring more closely.

Slower hiring has already lengthened the time it takes Americans [to land a new job](#). In December, 826,000 unemployed workers had been out of a job for about 3½ to 6 months, up from 526,000 in April 2022, according to the Labor Department.

“Employers are hovering with their feet above the brake. They’re more cautious. They’re more precise in their hiring,” said Jonas Prising, chief executive of [ManpowerGroup](#) Inc., a provider of temporary workers. “But they’ve not stopped hiring.”

Additional signs of a cooling economy emerged on Thursday when the Commerce Department said U.S. gross domestic product growth [slowed to a 2.9% annual rate](#) in the fourth quarter, down from a 3.2% annual rate in the third quarter.

Not all companies are in layoff mode. [Walmart](#) Inc., the country’s biggest private employer, said this week it [was raising its starting wages](#) for hourly U.S. workers to \$14 from \$12, amid a still tight job market for front line workers. Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. said Thursday it plans to hire 15,000 new employees to work in its restaurants, while plane maker Airbus SE said it is recruiting over 13,000 new staffers this year. Airbus said 9,000 of the new jobs would be based in Europe with the rest spread among the U.S., China and elsewhere.

[General Electric](#) Co., which slashed thousands of aerospace workers in 2020 and is currently laying off 2,000 workers from its wind turbine business, is hiring in other areas. “If you know any welders or machinists, send them my way,” Chief Executive Larry Culp said this week.

Annette Clayton, CEO of North American operations at [Schneider Electric SE](#), a Europe-headquartered energy-management and automation company, said the U.S. needs far more electricians to install electric-vehicle chargers and perform other tasks. “The shortage of electricians is very, very important for us,” she said.

Railroad CSX Corp. told investors on Wednesday that after sustained effort, it had reached its goal of about 7,000 train and engine employees around the beginning of the year, but plans to hire several hundred more people in those roles to serve as a cushion and to accommodate attrition that remains higher than the company would like.

[Freeport-McMoRan](#) Inc. executives said Wednesday they expect U.S. labor shortages to continue to crimp production at the mining giant. The company has about 1,300 job openings in a U.S. workforce of about 10,000 to 12,000, and many of its domestic workers are new and need training and experience to match prior expertise, President Kathleen Quirk told analysts.

“We could have in 2022 produced more if we were fully staffed, and I believe that is the case again this year,” Ms. Quirk said.

The latest layoffs are modest relative to the size of these companies. For example, IBM’s [plan to eliminate about 3,900 roles](#) would amount to a 1.4% reduction in its head count of 280,000, according to its latest annual report.

As interest rates rise and companies tighten their belts, white-collar workers have taken the brunt of layoffs and job cuts, breaking with the usual pattern leading into a downturn. WSJ explains why many professionals are getting the pink slip first. Illustration: Adele Morgan

The planned 3,000 job cuts at SAP [affect about 2.5%](#) of the business-software maker’s global workforce. Finance chief Luka Mucic said the job cuts would be spread across the company’s geographic footprint, with most of them happening outside its home base in Germany. “The purpose is to further focus on strategic growth areas,” Mr. Mucic said. The company employed around 111,015 people on average last year.

Chemicals giant Dow said on Thursday it [was trimming about 2,000 employees](#). The Midland, Mich., company said it currently employs about 37,800 people. Executives said they were targeting \$1 billion in cost cuts this year and shutting down some assets to align spending with the macroeconomic environment.

Manufacturer [3M](#) Co., which had about 95,000 employees at the end of 2021, cited weakening consumer demand when it announced this week [plans to eliminate 2,500 manufacturing jobs](#). The maker of Scotch tape, Post-it Notes and thousands of other industrial and consumer products said it expects lower sales and profit in 2023.

“We’re looking at everything that we do as we manage through the challenges that we’re facing in the end markets,” 3M Chief Executive Mike Roman said during an earnings conference call. “We expect the demand trends we saw in December to extend through the first half of 2023.”

[Hasbro](#) Inc. on Thursday said it would eliminate 15% of its workforce, or about 1,000 jobs, after the toy maker’s consumer-products business underperformed in the fourth quarter.

Some companies still hiring now say the job cuts across the economy are making it easier to find qualified candidates. “We’ve got the pick of the litter,” said Bill McDermott, CEO of business-software provider [ServiceNow](#) Inc. “We have so many applicants.”

At [Honeywell International](#) Inc., CEO Darius Adamczyk said the job market remains competitive. With the layoffs in technology, though, Mr. Adamczyk said he anticipated that the labor market would likely soften, potentially also expanding the applicants Honeywell could attract.

“We’re probably going to be even more selective than we were before because we’re going to have a broader pool to draw from,” he said.

Across the corporate sphere, many of the layoffs happening now are still small relative to the size of the organizations, said Denis Machuel, CEO of global staffing firm Adecco Group AG.

“I would qualify it more as a recalibration of the workforce than deep cuts,” Mr. Machuel said. “They are adjusting, but they are not cutting the muscle.”

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HEADLINE	01/26 Ukraine faces logistical hurdles with tanks
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/01/26/ukraine-tanks-leopard-abrams-logistics/

BERLIN — Nearly a year into the war in Ukraine, Western allies finally agreed to send Kyiv the battle tanks it says it so desperately needs.

The first battalion will have roughly 40 tanks, including newer German Leopard 2A6s, and could arrive by spring.

Are you on Telegram? Subscribe to our channel for the latest updates on Russia's war in Ukraine. But the broader package pieced together this week by the United States and other European nations includes a hodgepodge of tank models, each with different delivery times and unique logistical hurdles. Military experts are unsure if they will have a decisive effect on the battlefield — and Ukrainian forces still need to be trained on how to use them.

Ukraine has said that it needs at least 300 tanks to support a large-scale spring offensive against the Russians and has called the Western move to donate them a game changer. On Thursday, in apparent retaliation for the tank pledges a day earlier, Russia bombarded Ukrainian towns and cities with dozens of missiles, killing at least 11 people, officials said.

“No single weapons system or platform can be a game changer,” said Franz-Stefan Gady, a senior fellow at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. He said that the impact of the “limited number” of tanks arriving in March will depend on training and how well the new formations are integrated on the front line.

But because Germany waited so long to decide whether to send tanks, “it is unlikely that the Leopard 2 will play a significant role in any spring offensive,” he said.

Moscow on Thursday slammed the deliveries as an “escalation.”

Still, the Ukrainians are now expecting a planned transfer of 14 Challenger 2 tanks from Britain, as well as an eventual delivery of 31 M1A2 Abrams tanks from the United States. The M1A2 is a variant first fielded in the 1990s. It includes more modern electronics and targeting systems than its older cousin, the M1A1, and a 120 mm main cannon.

European countries are also dusting off decades-old stocks. Spain has mulled sending a batch of older Leopard 2A4s that have been mothballed for a decade and may need extensive repairs. Germany is rushing ahead with the newer A6 variant, with thermal imaging and a significantly more powerful high-velocity gun.

It is all valuable firepower as Ukraine stands against Russian forces, but with the additional complications of procuring ammunition, training capable forces, and organizing logistics for multiple weapons systems. Germany, Poland, and the United States are all planning separate tank training programs, with Germany and Poland set to begin theirs in days as they rush deliveries for spring.

The mishmash of different systems makes it “quite difficult from the logistical point,” said Sonny Butterworth, a tank expert with the defense intelligence firm Janes.

British Challenger 2s use different ammunition from the NATO standard. And when it comes to the Leopard 2s, there are subtle differences between the stocks held by each European country — even if they are the same model. A Spanish Leopard A4 may have a different fire control or radio system from a Finnish one, though they are essentially interoperable, experts say.

“The Ukrainians are going to be operating several different types of equipment and they are going to have to contend with having to support them with the right spare parts going to the right units,” Butterworth said.

Ukraine relies on old Soviet T-72 battle tanks and might feel it just needs the hardware to fight back against Russia and keep up the tempo on the battlefield, he said. But in the long term, operating multiple types of tanks could create bigger logistical snags.

The U.S. decision to send Abrams tanks to Ukraine — although not for months — eliminates a powerful weapon for Ukrainian forces in the short term. But it was also one that could have caused disarray without the proper logistical support and maintenance, experts say.

One U.S. official aware of the deliberations behind the decision said that while Ukrainian forces have shown a considerable ability to maintain and sustain U.S. equipment on the battlefield, operating Abrams tanks requires significant preparation, including training that will take place outside Ukraine.

“We are confident that we will be able to provide the adequate sustainment and maintenance support after some months,” the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the Biden administration.

Poland, which neighbors Ukraine, is also building up its own supply of M1 Abrams and could facilitate logistics and maintenance support, experts say.

One major complicating factor is the depleted uranium used in the armor packages specific to U.S. military versions of the tank. The armor includes classified aspects that the United States does not typically export, said one person familiar with the issue, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

It remained unclear Thursday where U.S. troops might train Ukrainian forces on the tank. One possibility was the Grafenwoehr Training Area in Germany, a sprawling facility in the Bavarian countryside where U.S. troops began training a battalion of more than 600 Ukrainian forces this month on how to combine artillery, armored vehicles and other weapons to maximize their impact on the battlefield.

During a first visit to troops on Thursday, Germany’s new Defense Minister, Boris Pistorius, pushed back at claims that the tank deliveries were insufficient or that German delays may have lost vital time.

“We didn’t hesitate, we negotiated,” he said. “We talked to our allies and our partners and friends.”

As the manufacturer of the Leopard tank, Berlin’s go-ahead is needed for deliveries from any of the more than a dozen countries that operate it, but it insisted that it would not “go it alone.”

Yuri Sak, an adviser to Ukraine’s Defense Ministry, said the Russians are so entrenched in the territories they occupy, “that for us to be able to advance with our counteroffensive means battle tanks are key.”

So far, Ukraine has relied on old Soviet T-72 tanks, which run low on ammunition in conflicts in which heavy artillery dominates. The new tanks will open the door to platforms that support ammunition that can be replenished by allies in what has become a war of attrition.

“In order to get three hundred [tanks], you have to work hard,” said Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine’s national security and defense council. “Everyone involved works every day, so that the number increases,” he said.

But it was important to have “a beginning,” he said. “It’s like the first step. It’s like permission.”

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HEADLINE	01/27 China speeds thru Covid to living with virus
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/01/27/china-covid-travel-lunar-new-year/v
GIST	Lena Zhang was ready to get covid as she embarked on her first visit to China in three years, a visit that coincided with an explosion of infections across the country.

Before the pandemic, Zhang would visit her parents in the northern city of Baoding from Austria every year. But China's strict pandemic border controls and Zhang's fear of passing the virus to elderly relatives had stopped her from returning since 2019.

After Beijing removed quarantine and other restrictions on entry last month, Zhang decided to make the long journey home for Lunar New Year — even though the country was, really for the first time since the pandemic began, experiencing a nationwide outbreak. Fully expecting to get infected on arrival in China, she prepared for a cautious celebration spent almost entirely at home.

The reality for Zhang, 42, and her family has been a quiet but relatively relaxed and surprisingly normal celebration because most people, including almost everyone in her family, caught the virus a while ago. Grocery stores and farmers markets have been crowded.

“It seems difficult to get infected,” she joked, alluding to the apparent current sweet spot of post-infection immunity.

In the short six weeks from China suddenly dropping its “zero covid” policy to the middle of January, a huge surge of infection, critical cases and deaths overwhelmed hospital emergency departments and forced crematoriums to work nonstop. Epidemiologists feared that a month of concentrated travel for the Spring Festival holiday, centered around Lunar New Year celebrations on Jan. 22, would extend the outbreak and bring it deep into rural areas, where the population is older and the medical facilities are often basic.

Instead, Chinese health authorities have this week doubled down on claims that the peak of deaths was in early January and say a second wave is unlikely to hit soon. Such a speedy recovery is at odds with international projections that suggest a far higher death toll than the official count of just over 72,000 since restrictions were suddenly dropped in early December.

But many Chinese families, exhausted by three years of unpredictable disruption of their lives, have spent the holidays trying to move on.

The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention Wednesday announced that infections from the current wave peaked in December, while critical cases have declined by more than 70 percent since early January. They added that the highest number of deaths in a single day was 4,273 on Jan. 4, and the count had fallen to 896 by Jan. 23.

Experts outside China are highly skeptical about these official numbers, and such an abrupt and relatively low peak is hard to match with projections by groups like Britain-based research group Airfinity, which earlier this month predicted that mass travel would push the daily death toll to about 36,000 this week. China's mortality data includes only those who die in hospitals from respiratory failure or a sharp worsening of an underlying condition deemed caused directly by covid, a narrow definition that experts say excludes many covid-related deaths.

Zhang's hometown of Baoding, a city of 3 million people about 100 miles southwest of Beijing, became among the earliest to suffer from surging infections, with reports in early December of overcrowded emergency departments. But by the end of the month, state media was holding the city up as a rapid recovery success story.

Officials began the holiday on a cautiously optimistic note. Chinese leader Xi Jinping broke with a decade-long tradition of visiting the countryside ahead of the holiday, instead holding a virtual call with rural residents. “Tough challenges remain,” he said, “but the light of hope is right in front of us.”

Wu Zunyou, the chief epidemiologist at China's CDC, on Jan. 21 estimated that around 80 percent of the country had already caught covid in this wave.

As the holiday progressed, the drumbeat of upbeat propaganda grew louder as reminders of the outbreak started to fade into the background. Eager for a long-awaited return to normalcy, many families appear happy to accept a sense of relief and forget about the virus for the holidays as some are reunited for the first since the start of the pandemic.

Since the outbreak of the virus just before Spring Festival in 2020, those employed far from home in construction or manufacturing were strongly encouraged by officials to forgo their once-a-year visit home over the Lunar New Year and remain wherever they were employed.

This week, moving videos uploaded by returning migrant workers who surprise young children or elderly parents have been shared widely online, often tagged with a simple three-character description: “It’s been three years.”

Optimism was apparent among online messages sent to Li Wenliang, the Wuhan doctor who died of covid after being reprimanded by police for calling attention to the then-unknown virus.

Since his death, Li’s page on microblog Weibo has become a place of solace where many go to vent frustration, give thanks or wish for an end to the pandemic. “Doctor Li, the virus is much weaker now, everyone is happily celebrating the new year,” one user wrote this week. “If it had been like this at the start, you would have definitely been okay.”

Official propaganda has spurred on the sense of a new beginning. For the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, a covid-themed skit was absent from the state broadcaster’s annual Spring Festival gala, the variety show switched on (and occasionally watched) in almost all Chinese homes on Lunar New Year’s eve. Its live audience did not wear masks.

Before the Lunar New Year, the Cybersecurity Administration of China urged vigilance against “gloomy sentiments” and pandemic-related rumors in a bid to “cultivate a positive, spiritually healthy atmosphere for online public opinion during Spring Festival.”

The censor’s heavy hand has been evident. Videos of patients packed into hospital hallways, once widely shared, have become hard to find online. Instead, dominating social media discussion are topics such as which Chinese movie would top the holiday box office.

The reversal has been so dramatic that some online even began to question whether the virus had just suddenly disappeared. Ming Jinwei, a former state media editor turned political blogger, responded that, while it wasn’t yet gone, “the impact of the virus on the vast majority of people is right now fading away.”

“Chinese society has created a basic barrier of natural immunity at a speed rarely seen elsewhere in the world,” he wrote in an essay on social media app WeChat.

Regardless of the veracity of the official pronouncements, many in China now, after a period of caution, appear ready to accept that the pandemic is coming to an end. Holiday train, plane and automobile travel is near pre-covid levels with 700 million trips having been taken as of Jan. 26. Tourists have flocked to popular sightseeing destinations around the country.

The southern island of Hainan, sometimes called China’s Hawaii, has been especially popular as people flee from record-breaking cold in the north. State media has reported that resort hotels in the southernmost city of Sanya are 90 percent full.

Zhang and her family in Baoding have joined those going south — prepared, once again, to accept the risk of getting infected on the way. “I’m heading to Hainan on yet another packed plane,” she said by text. “Let’s see what happens.”

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SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/01/27/us-marshall-islands-china-pacific-power/
GIST	<p>MAJURO, Marshall Islands — The leaders of the Marshall Islands, a collection of 29 coral atolls lying halfway between Hawaii and Australia, know exactly why the United States just agreed to a deal promising \$700 million in new support over four years.</p> <p>“It’s because of China. We’re not naive,” Marshallese Foreign Minister Kitlang Kabua said in an interview at a restaurant close to the country’s parliament in the capital of Majuro. It offered a view of a vast lagoon speckled with rusted fishing ships that bring in tuna, and the coconut palms that fringe the thin circle of land that makes up the Marshalls’ main atoll.</p> <p>Fishing and harvesting are not, however, sufficient to support the country’s population of about 80,000.</p> <p>For the past 40 years, the Marshall Islands has relied on financial assistance from its former colonizer, the United States, which carried out 67 nuclear tests on two Marshallese atolls in the 12 years after World War II.</p> <p>The current 20-year treaty expires this year, and talks about a new deal were not going particularly well last year. Then the Marshalls’ government got Washington’s attention when several top officials refused to attend treaty negotiations running alongside a high-level Pacific summit at the White House in September unless the Biden administration agreed to a better deal.</p> <p>The bargaining tactic worked: The administration dispatched high-level representatives to the Marshall Islands for further negotiations, where a newer and much larger agreement was reached.</p> <p>The case of the Marshall Islands is emblematic of the increasingly fervent geopolitical competition in the Pacific as the United States and China jostle for influence.</p> <p>The Biden administration has acknowledged that Pacific islands got a “short shrift” as the United States focused its attention elsewhere. It is now rapidly trying to make up for lost time as China lavishes money and attention on many island nations in an attempt to grow influence across the Pacific and reap economic, diplomatic and military gains.</p> <p>“We’re caught between two big powers like a girl two boys are fighting over,” said Peterson Jibas, a Marshallese senator and member of the country’s negotiating team.</p> <p>This month, the Biden administration agreed to the outlines of a formal deal, pledging \$700 million to the Marshall Islands’ national trust fund to help foster economic development, support nuclear victims and protect against climate change. It is also negotiating similar deals with two other Micronesian countries: the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.</p> <p>Joseph Yun, Biden’s special envoy in the negotiations, insisted in an interview with The Washington Post that a range of issues shaped his offer, including climate change and the Marshall Islands’ “steady” support of America. But, he admitted: “It’s no secret — China is a factor.”</p> <p>The new agreement gives Washington significant control over Marshallese foreign policy, a veto over foreign military use of Marshallese territory — which, with Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia, covers an expanse of ocean larger than the continental United States — and a long-term lease over the land used for a critical American military base.</p> <p>In return, the United States provides financial support and allows Marshallese citizens visa-free access to America.</p> <p>The islands’ leaders have long complained that previous deals did not adequately compensate them for the damage done by American nuclear testing here.</p>

Just two years after the United States took control of the Marshall Islands from Imperial Japan in 1944, it began testing its new nuclear weapons here, detonating the equivalent of 7,000 Hiroshima bombs on Bikini and Enewetak atolls by 1958, causing heightened cancer rates, miscarriages and ongoing resentment that lingered long after the fallout had cleared.

“They say communism is bad, but China didn’t drop 67 bombs on us,” said Jibas, who represents Bikini and remains suspicious of his country’s main financial contributor. “America is like a white rat with red eyes.”

Both Washington and Beijing understand the strategic importance of island nations like the Marshalls.

The United States gained control here only after thousands of Americans died during its brutal World War II campaign through Micronesia. Although the United States said at the time that it was liberating the Marshall Islands from Japanese colonizers, when the war ended it never left. Instead, it took over its governance, using it as a “buffer” against competitors like China and a home for military bases, local officials say.

Even after Micronesian countries gained independence in the late-20th century, Washington maintained control through agreements like the one with the Marshall Islands.

The imbalance of power meant the Marshall Islands had previously struggled to press its case, Jibas said. “America is like an older brother. What do you do when he slaps you?”

Yet the frustration of people like Jibas co-exists alongside a degree of goodwill felt by others, born of the United States’ long presence in Micronesia. Many Marshallese routinely refer to America as “the mainland.”

The Americans “are friendly people,” said Lillian Maika, who sat in a cozy home on the small island of Ebeye. Above her hung a photograph of her son, who was killed while serving in South Korea with the American military. While she says “too many” Marshallese are coaxed into the military out of a lack of other opportunities, she still appreciated that America “gives us work, plenty of money. We get what we need.”

That familiarity with America is matched by a general suspicion of China. Lucia Lomae, an elderly Marshallese woman who cradled her grandchild outside her home on the remote island of Eubirr, thought that “China is not good,” although she said she wasn’t sure why.

Ongoing poverty and a growing Chinese presence, however, mean familiarity alone is increasingly insufficient.

Beijing last year proposed a sweeping Pacific-wide economic and security agreement that would have led to increased trade and Chinese involvement in the training of regional police forces, among other things.

While Pacific nations [rejected the deal](#) during a regional summit, several nations expressed interest in a modified version. China has also notched significant wins with several individual Pacific nations.

Kiribati, which lies immediately south of the Marshall Islands, cut ties with Taiwan in favor of China in 2019, and signed as many as 10 agreements deepening relations during a visit by China’s foreign minister last May.

The Solomon Islands meanwhile [signed a controversial agreement](#) allowing it to invite China to deploy armed police and military personnel there, sparking fears China might construct a military base in the country. Solomon Islands officials have dismissed such concerns, but this has not assuaged Western fears.

At the same time, China has provided Kiribati and the Solomon Islands with significant aid and financing.

	<p>Hence the sudden American effort to pay more attention — and more financial aid — to the region. At the September White House summit, Biden promised an additional \$810 million in aid for the Pacific generally.</p> <p>“The security of America, quite frankly, and the world depends on your security and the security of the Pacific islands,” Biden said at the time.</p> <p>But the United States’ fraught history also means Pacific officials treat such commitments carefully. Despite her significant victories, the Marshallese foreign minister remains cautious.</p> <p>“If we take you as a friend, we expect you to act as a friend. But the U.S. is a different matter. They’re sneaky. They’re smart,” Kabua said.</p> <p>Now the Marshall Islands is enjoying playing its stronger hand. In its most recent negotiations, “we were much more wary, we were less naive, we put our foot down and made our demands,” Kabua said. “We found that this is how we operate with the U.S., and we found it to be effective.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/27 Kyiv defiant after missile strikes
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/01/27/russia-ukraine-war-latest-updates/
GIST	<p>Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed defiance against the Kremlin after another barrage of Russian missiles hit targets throughout Ukraine on Thursday, in the wake of Western pledges to ship heavy battle tanks to Kyiv. “This evil, this Russian aggression can and should be stopped only with adequate weapons. The terrorist state will not understand anything else,” Zelensky said in his nightly address.</p> <p>“Every Russian missile against our cities, every Iranian drone used by terrorists is an argument why we need more weapons,” he added. “Only weapons neutralize terrorists.”</p> <p>Key developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The latest Russian missiles killed at least 11 people and injured another 11 residents, a Ukrainian government spokesman said. Ukraine’s top general said Russia had fired 55 air and sea-based missiles. Ukraine’s air force said 24 Iranian-made drones were shot down. • The variant of the American tank going to Ukraine will be the M1A2 Abrams, Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said Thursday, disclosing for the first time new details about what kind of tank will be purchased and sent to Kyiv. The M1A2 has more advanced electronics and targeting ability than the M1A1 Abrams, according to U.S. military specifications. The U.S. military owns both versions. • U.S. government auditors are in Kyiv this week as part of broader measures aimed at ensuring “no aid or weapons” sent to Ukraine are diverted, Victoria Nuland, the undersecretary for political affairs at the State Department, told lawmakers Thursday. The remarks came after several senior Ukrainian officials resigned or faced dismissal this week due to allegations of corruption. • Yevgeniy Prigozhin, the Russian tycoon behind Russia’s Wagner mercenary group, decried new U.S. sanctions imposed on Wagner. In a statement, Prigozhin said that he alone funded the group and said that he would “spit on” any sanctions. Prigozhin and Wagner have been accused of working to evade sanctions in the past; some U.S. lawmakers feel that Wagner should be designated a terrorist organization, a label that would trigger even stronger financial restrictions.
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HEADLINE	01/27 Africa less democratic, safe than 10yrs ago
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/01/27/africa-democracy-safety-decline-coup/
GIST	A new study of Africa’s 54 countries provides grim reading. It found that much of the continent is less safe and less democratic than it was a decade ago, a marker of worrying political trends that accelerated

over the course of the pandemic. A surge in military coups and the spread of armed conflicts now threaten to stall, and even reverse, years of political progress across the region.

The index, which is put out every two years by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, [compiles a ranking of quality of overall governance across Africa](#) based on scores allocated to a range of criteria, including development, economic opportunity and political inclusion. [According to the analysis](#), its subcategories measuring democratic participation and “security and rule of law” both deteriorated, with the “pace of decline accelerating since 2017.” An estimated 70 percent of the continent’s population lives in countries that the index classifies as less safe now than in 2012.

The report pointed to 23 successful or attempted coups since 2012, and eight takeovers by juntas since 2019. Mali and Burkina Faso, two West African neighbors once known for their relative political stability, have recently [experienced two coups each](#). “This phenomenon of coup d’états that was common in the ’80s seems to have become fashionable again in certain parts of Africa,” Mo Ibrahim, a Sudanese-born British billionaire who has used his wealth to promote democracy and good governance in Africa, [told reporters this week](#).

A decade and a half ago, Ibrahim established an annual prize in his name to be awarded to a democratically elected, former African leader who championed good governance, the rule of law and set an example for leadership to the wider region. The prize came with a hefty \$5 million reward, an incentive, it seemed, for the continent’s politicians to care about their legacies. But for the majority of the years since the prize was first announced, Ibrahim’s foundation has chosen not to award it.

Analysts and experts have fretted about democratic decline in Africa for years. The end of the Cold War precipitated a wave of democratization across the continent. According to the [rankings](#) of Freedom House, a Washington-based think tank, two-thirds of African states were classified as “not free” in 1989. In 2009, two-thirds were considered “free” or “partly free.”

The positive trends did not continue over the past decade, as a host of governments hid behind the fig leaf of electoral democracy even as they consolidated a more autocratic grip. A 2021 report submitted to the European Parliament [attempted to map out](#) why: “Two sets of reasons account for the fragility of democracies in sub-Saharan Africa. ... The first include low socio-economic development, conflict and insecurity; the second include weak institutions, lack of judicial independence, manipulation of electoral laws and constitutional norms, as well as serious limitations of civil and political rights.”

“In practice, authoritarian regimes have become skilled at using a facade of legality to legitimize their grip on power,” the report adds.

Then came the pandemic, which, as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation noted, led to “a worrying trend of state-backed violence” along with accelerated rates of violence against civilians and armed conflict. Insurgencies and wars metastasized from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, as well as in regions further south. Where there were not deepening conflicts, there were deepening autocratic regimes.

“Even before the pandemic, an increasing number of African heads of state had moved to undermine term limits or rig elections to remain in power,” [observed the Council of Foreign Relations](#), one year into the pandemic. “But COVID-19 has given them greater leverage, providing further pretext for postponing elections in Somalia and Ethiopia, muzzling opposition figures in Uganda and Tanzania, and [imposing restrictions](#) on media across the continent.”

On top of that, the enforcement of pandemic restrictions was often brutal, giving rise to demonstrations in countries including Kenya and South Africa, it adds.

Nevertheless, the desire for greater democracy and stronger government is widespread in Africa, [as recent polling indicates](#). “The public’s democratic commitment is undergirded by strong and in some cases growing support for core democratic institutions,” [noted British think tank Chatham House](#) last August. “Support for multiparty competition and parliamentary oversight of leaders remains steady, while

	<p>expectations that governments should be accountable to the courts have increased significantly over the past decade.”</p> <p>According to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s analysis, there have been marked improvements in other continental indicators, including advances in health and education, equality for women and infrastructure for development. But it can’t evade a troubled global moment, where democracy is in decline elsewhere, where climate change wreaks havoc in the world’s poorest and most vulnerable communities, and where the vicissitudes of the pandemic have exposed the ailing, debt-ridden economies of the developing world.</p> <p>“We did not cause climate change, but we are hit by it,” Ibrahim told Reuters in an interview. “We did not start the war in Ukraine, but we’re hit by that. We did not start covid, but we get hit by that. Then we have bad governance. We’re responsible for it.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Afghanistan winter temperatures plunge
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/01/26/afghanistan-cold-weather-temperature-winter/
GIST	<p>Temperatures hit severe lows in Afghanistan this month, marking the coldest winter in over a decade and killing more than 160 people in about two weeks, officials said.</p> <p>Early this month, temperatures plunged to below minus-34 degrees Celsius (minus-29.2 degrees Fahrenheit).</p> <p>Of the 162 people who have died because of the cold weather since Jan. 10, more than half died in the past week, said Shafiullah Rahim, a spokesman for the Ministry of Disaster Management, Reuters reported Thursday. Afghans have been dying of hypothermia, as well as carbon monoxide poisoning and gas leakage, amid a widespread lack of heating systems, local outlet Tolo News reported.</p> <p>The deadly cold spell comes on top of a broader humanitarian crisis that the U.N. humanitarian affairs office said Tuesday poses a “very real risk of systemic collapse and human catastrophe.” More than half of Afghanistan’s population faces severe hunger, and 97 percent is at risk of falling into poverty.</p> <p>Acting minister of disaster management Mullah Mohammad Abbas Akhund told the BBC this week that many died in rural areas, including shepherds.</p> <p>He said earlier this month that 70,000 livestock died, taking a huge toll on the livelihood of farmers and exacerbating local food insecurity, the BBC reported.</p> <p>Relief efforts to rescue and protect Afghans from the cold are ongoing. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan said Sunday on Twitter that more than 565,700 people have been reached — more than half of those targeted.</p> <p>But nationwide aid efforts, already lagging, have been further hampered by a Taliban decision on Dec. 24 to immediately ban Afghan women from working in foreign and domestic nongovernment groups. That includes the many nonprofit organizations working to provide aid.</p> <p>Amid the weather-related fatalities, Akhund told BBC this week that “men from every family are already participating in relief efforts, so there’s no need for women.”</p> <p>U.N. officials visited Afghanistan last week to express alarm over the decree banning women from NGOs.</p> <p>“These restrictions present Afghan women and girls with a future that confines them in their own homes, violating their rights and depriving the communities of their services,” U.N. Deputy Secretary General Amina Mohammed, who led the delegation, said last week.</p>

	She told reporters Wednesday that she went into Afghanistan thinking that “perhaps the most conservative of them [Taliban leaders] didn’t care about recognition — they do,” Voice of America reported . “Recognition is one leverage that we have and should hold on to.”
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HEADLINE	01/26 Russia latest missile strike wave kills 12
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/world/europe/russia-ukraine-missile-strikes.html
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — Russia fired dozens of missiles at Ukrainian cities on Thursday, piercing snow clouds and air defenses to kill at least 12 people across the country, in the Kremlin’s campaign to punish civilians while its army fights in Ukraine’s east.</p> <p>The wave of strikes came a day after Germany and the United States pledged to send dozens of battle tanks to Ukraine, a significant step up in Western military support. Ukraine managed to shoot down 47 of the 55 missiles, according to its Air Force command, including 20 in the area around the capital, Kyiv.</p> <p>But a variety of Russian strikes still killed 11 people across 11 regions, Ukraine’s State Emergency Service said. Another 11 people were wounded, and 35 buildings were damaged, it said.</p> <p>A 12th civilian was killed later in the day when a Russian rocket hit a village council building in Kochubeivka, a tiny community in the Kherson region, a military official said on Telegram.</p> <p>As it has for months, Russia appeared to target Ukraine’s energy grid in subfreezing winter weather. “The main goal is energy facilities providing Ukrainians with light and heat,” Ukraine’s prime minister, Denys Shmyhal, said in a post on Telegram.</p> <p>Since October, Russia has launched more than a dozen major waves of missiles and drones on Ukraine’s energy facilities, as well as many smaller attacks, in a campaign to impair the power supply and leave civilians without power, heat and light over winter.</p> <p>The barrages have sometimes come after Ukrainian successes, like its fall campaigns in the northeast and the south, but have continued as the pace of fighting has slowed to a grueling battle of attrition in the east and south.</p> <p>The missile strikes have often landed in residential areas, as well, sometimes to devastating effect, as when more than 40 people were killed in a strike on an apartment building in Dnipro, in central Ukraine.</p> <p>Large booms shook Kyiv about 10 a.m. local time on Thursday, sending residents fleeing into subway shelters and basements. The mayor, Vitali Klitschko, said one person had been killed and two wounded when a projectile hit a building in the city’s south.</p> <p>At least one blast could be heard on camera, interrupting an interview that a member of Ukraine’s Parliament was giving to the broadcaster Sky News. “Where was it?” a woman asks in the video, as the lawmaker and journalist stand amid destroyed Russian tanks. “Not far away.”</p> <p>Three people were killed in a Russian strike on infrastructure in Zaporizhzhia, the state prosecutor general’s office said on Telegram. There were also reports of missile strikes in the Vinnytsia region in western Ukraine and outside the port city of Odesa, causing “massive power outages” there, according to Ukraine’s foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba.</p> <p>France’s foreign minister, Catherine Colonna, was in Odesa on Thursday to meet with Mr. Kuleba — diplomatic talks that were literally forced underground by the Russian strikes.</p> <p>“Thanks to a Russian missile, I experienced my 1st diplomatic bilateral meeting in a shelter,” Ms. Colonna tweeted on Thursday, sharing a photo of the ministers at a table in a bare room. “Coffee was warm, merci!”</p>

Mr. Kuleba, who noted that Odesa's historic center was designated a world heritage site in danger this week by UNESCO, said on Twitter that the meeting was "probably the first time in history when Foreign Ministers hold talks in the basement of an Opera House."

The U.N. agency's designation gives the city, which was conquered in the late 18th century by the Russian Empire and given the name Odesa by the empress Catherine the Great, "access to reinforced technical and financial international assistance," UNESCO said. "Ukraine may request this to ensure the protection of the property and, if necessary, assist in reconstruction if attacked."

Ms. Colonna said that the ministers had discussed French support for Ukraine, saying, "Our assistance will continue in all areas and for as long as necessary."

Mr. Kuleba — who joked that the French minister was "the Catherine I'm pleased to see in Odesa" — has pressed Ukraine's supporters in Europe and the United States to significantly increase their military aid. Not long after Germany and the United States announced they would send dozens of battle tanks to Ukraine, he called for "Western-type fighter jets."

Ukrainian officials have argued that such warplanes would help them defend against Russia's missile volleys.

For the past week, Russia's Air Force has been conducting exercises north of Ukraine in Belarus, keeping Ukraine on heightened alert. Countrywide air attack sirens have sounded each time Russian planes take to the air.

Overnight, according to Ukraine's Air Force Command, Ukraine's air defenses shot down 24 Iranian-made Shahed exploding drones.

Both the United States and Germany have pledged [Patriot air-defense](#) missile batteries to Ukraine, and the U.S. military is training Ukrainian troops in Oklahoma on how to use the weapon, which is the most advanced American ground-based air-defense system.

The Biden administration has significantly increased its military aid to Ukraine over the past year, gradually expanding the array of arms it has agreed to provide to include [HIMARS rocket artillery systems](#) last summer, [Stryker armored fighting vehicles](#), Patriot missiles and, now, M1 Abrams tanks. Britain has promised to send some of its Challenger 2 tanks, while Germany has agreed to supply some of its Leopard 2 tanks and to allow other countries to give theirs to Ukraine.

Military experts and Western officials say they believe that Ukraine and Russia will both attempt offensives in the spring, as Kyiv puts to use the heavy weapons sent from the West and Russia deploys the huge numbers of men it drafted last year.

"The spring and summer look like they're going to be fairly decisive," said Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at C.N.A., a research institute in Arlington, Va. Speaking on [the podcast "War on the Rocks"](#) this week, Mr. Kofman said that in its next offensive, Ukraine would have "a strong opportunity to show that it can continue retaking territory."

But unlike its past offensives in the Kharkiv region to the northeast and the Kherson region to the south, "the next offensive comes with risk," he said. "If it's not successful, Ukraine faces the real danger of a counteroffensive."

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HEADLINE	01/27 Russia campaign stifles free press
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/01/27/world/russia-ukraine-news#russia-continues-to-stifle-the-free-press-and-outlaws-meduza-a-leading-independent-news-site

GIST

Russian officials continued their campaign to stifle press freedom on Thursday, labeling the independent news website Meduza an “undesirable organization” and effectively outlawing its content. The move made Meduza the latest journalistic outlet to fall victim to the Kremlin’s efforts to suppress criticism.

The Russian prosecutor general’s office said that Meduza’s activities posed “a threat to the foundations of the Russian Federation’s constitutional order and national security,” according to the Interfax news agency.

Over the past year, Moscow has ramped up its attempts to control coverage of the war in Ukraine. In March, President Vladimir V. Putin signed a law effectively criminalizing any public opposition to or independent reporting about the war.

Announcements about the new law pushed some Russian independent news media outlets [to shut down even before it was enacted](#). The Russian government has also cut off access to Facebook and to the BBC and other news sources.

“Russian authorities are showing that they will do anything to impede the work of one of the leading independent Russian-language media outlets,” Gulnoza Said, the Europe and Central Asia coordinator of the Committee to Protect Journalists, a press watchdog organization, [said in a statement](#).

Meduza, a popular Latvia-based outlet that publishes news about Russia in both Russian and English, often reports critically on the war in Ukraine. It posts on its website and to over one million subscribers on Telegram, in Russia and elsewhere.

The website was blocked in Russia last year at the start of the war, but the new “undesirable” designation has even more far-reaching consequences. Now, anyone in Russia who goes to the site, “likes” any of its social media content or shares a link to an article could face fines or jail time.

Meduza’s editor in chief, Ivan Kolpakov, called the designation a “very bad event,” but said that “nevertheless, we were waiting for this to happen — and we tried to prepare ourselves.”

The site plans to continue to publish, although its future plans are unclear.

Even before the Ukraine invasion, Moscow had labeled Meduza a “foreign agent,” wiping out its advertising revenue and compelling it to shift to a crowdfunding model to stay in business. As a foreign agent, Meduza had to add a [24-word disclaimer](#) about its new status to all of its Russian-language content, including social media posts. If it did not, the organization and its journalists could receive fines or jail time.

In June, the independent business news site VTimes [shut down](#) after Russia’s foreign-agent designation hurt its business and made it difficult for reporters to do their jobs. And in August, the government added TV Rain, long a top independent outlet, and the news site iStories to the foreign-agent list.

Other independent news sources have been feeling pressure from Moscow’s efforts to censor their coverage, even as they see a new urgency to provide unfiltered reporting.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, a news network originally set up as a C.I.A. operation early in the Cold War, [is an example](#). Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last February both shook up Radio Free Europe’s operations and highlighted its mission’s importance.

Within days of the invasion, the organization [suspended its operations in Russia](#). It had faced years of growing pressure from Moscow and had already evacuated most of its staff to Prague and other offices even before the war broke out.

Jamie Fly, the broadcaster’s president and chief executive, said his organization had long been in firefighting mode.

	“The challenge we’re facing now, and the invasion of Ukraine, is just the latest iteration,” Mr. Fly said in an interview late last year. “We are increasingly getting pressure when we’re operating in these environments, and in some cases, we’re getting pushed out of countries. That’s always been a challenge for us.”
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HEADLINE	01/27 UNESCO designates Odesa as heritage site
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/01/27/world/russia-ukraine-news#odesa-unesco-world-heritage-site
GIST	<p>The United Nations cultural agency, UNESCO, has designated the historic center of Odesa as a World Heritage Site and classified it as being “in danger” during a committee session in Paris on Wednesday, in a nod to the historic importance of a Black Sea port that Russia has battered with missiles as it tries to reconquer Ukraine.</p> <p>France’s foreign minister, Catherine Colonna, traveled to the city on Thursday in a show of support, but her plans were interrupted by the threat of a Russian missile strike.</p> <p>“Thanks to a Russian missile, I experienced my first diplomatic bilateral meeting in a shelter,” Ms. Colonna wrote on Twitter, sharing a photo with Ukraine’s minister of foreign affairs.</p> <p>President Volodymyr Zelensky called on the United Nations to designate Odesa as an endangered World Heritage Site in October, and the process was fast-tracked at the U.N. agency out of concern for the damage being done to the city’s many cultural sites. Including the city on the UNESCO list is intended to put pressure on Russia to refrain from attacking Odesa and gives the city access to more financial and technical assistance.</p> <p>Gennadiy Trukhanov, the city’s mayor, has called Odesa “the intercultural capital of Ukraine,” making it a symbol of Ukrainian identity. Mr. Trukhanov expressed gratitude to UNESCO after the announcement on Telegram, adding that he hoped for “a new level of development, new opportunities and a new Odesa.”</p> <p>According to the agency, at least 236 cultural sites in Ukraine have been damaged since the Russian invasion began, including religious buildings, museums, monuments and libraries.</p> <p>With access to the Black Sea, the southern port city has long been a place where different cultures have met and mingled. Founded in the late 18th century by Russia’s Empress Catherine the Great, it is home to hundreds of buildings of architectural and cultural importance both to Russians and Ukrainians, making it a prize in the war.</p> <p>Odesa has come under significant Russian aerial strikes, but Russian troops were unable to capture it last year, with their offensive stopped at the city of Mykolaiv about 80 miles to the east. As attacks on Odesa have mounted, volunteers and Ukrainian forces have made efforts to fortify specific buildings, cover monuments with sandbags and erect barricades.</p> <p>The Odesa Museum of Fine Arts and the Odesa Museum of Modern Art have both been damaged in shelling, and UNESCO promised to repair them.</p> <p>The city has “left its mark on cinema, literature and the arts,” Audrey Azoulay, the agency’s director general, said in a statement. “This inscription embodies our collective determination to ensure that this city, which has always surmounted global upheavals, is preserved from further destruction.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 China cracks down ‘zero-Covid’ protesters
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/world/asia/china-protests-arrests.html
GIST	First, the accountant and the freelance writer were taken away. Then, the former tutor with a degree in English literature. And several days later, the police came for the editor at the Beijing publishing house.

The four detained women were friends. They spent their free time in China's capital as many curious, creative-minded young people did: hosting book clubs, watching movies, discussing social issues like feminism and L.G.B.T.Q. rights over barbecue. When protests against coronavirus restrictions broke out in November across China, including in Beijing, they attended. And now, they are among the first people known to have been formally arrested in connection with those protests.

China is waging a campaign of intimidation against people who joined the demonstrations, which were the boldest challenge to the Communist Party's rule in decades and an embarrassing affront to its leader, Xi Jinping.

The party seems determined to warn off anyone who may have been emboldened by the remarkable outburst of public discontent, which was followed just days later by Beijing's abrupt decision to abandon Covid restrictions. Since then, domestic challenges have mounted: Youth unemployment is high, the economy is slowing, and Covid infections and deaths have accelerated.

The authorities have not officially announced the arrests and have largely avoided even acknowledging the protests. In seeking to tamp down unrest without further inflaming public anger, the party has often [favored discreet repression](#).

But news about the arrests — as well as the interrogations and detentions of many other protesters — has circulated widely among those who attended the demonstrations, or who cheered them on as hope for a rebirth of civil society. For many, the crackdown is a fresh reminder of the authorities' intolerance for even peaceful dissent, and of the personal risks that come with testing Beijing.

The party is also working to discredit the protesters by casting them as tools of malevolent foreign powers. Beijing has long dismissed dissent at home — from calls for women's rights to [pro-democracy activism](#) to [ethnic unrest](#) — as the result of Western-backed subversion. The protests against “zero Covid” were no exception: One Chinese diplomat [suggested](#) that some of the demonstrators had been “bought by external forces.”

The New York Times spoke with several people familiar with the cases of the four women who have been arrested. They requested anonymity out of fear of retaliation, to provide details about the women's arrests and interrogations. The people have been closely tracking the women's cases, including from weeks earlier when the police began questioning them. They were either in touch with them before their arrests or with people close to them since they disappeared.

The police have asked the women about their use of overseas messaging platforms or involvement in feminist activities, such as reading groups, according to the people. Chinese propaganda has decried feminism as another tool of foreign influence.

The women, for their part, have said they were driven by their own convictions and a belief that they had a right, even in China, to voice them. Before she was detained in December, one of the women, Cao Zhixin, the editor, recorded a video that she entrusted to friends to share if she went missing.

“We care about this society,” said Ms. Cao, 26, in the video, in which she said that the other three women — Li Yuanjing, the accountant; Li Siqi, 27, the freelance writer; and Zhai Dengrui, the former literature student — had already been taken away.

“At the scene, we respected public order, we didn't provoke any conflicts with the police,” Ms. Cao continued. “So why do you still have to secretly take us away?”

It is far from clear that the four women were targeted because of their interest in feminism. Other protesters may have also been arrested. Some Chinese social media users have tried to publicize the names of people missing since the protests, with various crowdsourced lists naming around two dozen people.

But the legal system is opaque and social media is heavily censored, making a thorough accounting difficult. Under Chinese law, the police can detain people for more than a month without formally arresting them.

But even if the authorities had not initially singled the women out for their feminist activities, once they were under investigation, those activities could have made them a target, said Lu Pin, a Chinese feminist activist who now lives in the United States, having faced harassment at home.

“The Chinese government has to look for an explanation that fits their logic, and they don’t believe that people organize on their own, according to their own political feeling. There must be a ‘black hand,’” Ms. Lu said. “In China, feminism is the last active, visible social movement.”

The protest in Beijing on Nov. 27 began as a candlelight vigil for at least 10 people who died in an apartment fire in the far-western region of Xinjiang in November. Many Chinese believed that Covid restrictions had prevented the victims from escaping, though the government denied that.

The women had attended out of grief, Ms. Cao, the editor, said in her video.

“We have legitimate emotions to express when our compatriots are killed, we are full of sympathy for those who lost their lives — that is why we went,” Ms. Cao said.

That night, the Beijing police were relatively restrained, even as the vigil turned into a street protest calling for an end to “zero Covid” and greater political freedoms. Officers filmed participants but did not aggressively detain people on site.

One official, witnessed by a Times reporter, told protesters that he also mourned for those who had died in the fire. Another reminded marchers, “No one has touched you.”

But that soon changed. In the days afterward, people who had attended protests in Beijing and other cities described being summoned or visited at home by officers, who asked why they had gone to the demonstrations, and with whom. Some were told their phone location data had been used to track them down. China’s ambassador to France, Lu Shaye, called the protesters pawns of “foreign forces,” then refused to give evidence for that when asked by reporters.

A similar theme may have emerged in the police interrogations of the four women, according to the people familiar with their cases.

The police asked about the women’s book clubs, where they had read Chizuko Ueno, a prominent Japanese feminist scholar. They pointed to their use of Telegram, the messaging app, which is blocked in China without special software. At least some of the women had studied overseas.

The police have accused the women of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” the people familiar with the cases said — a vague crime that the authorities often charge critics with to silence them. It is punishable by up to five years’ imprisonment.

Reached by telephone, an official with the Beijing public security bureau said that no one would be available for comment until after the weeklong Lunar New Year holiday.

Ms. Lu, the feminist activist in the United States, said the police’s evident focus on people who were not prominent organizers, or even apparently part of any larger group, underscored how the authorities had decimated civil society.

“After all the repression, in the eyes of the police, these people have become the most threatening forces,” she said. “These communities that normally would not be considered political — people eating together, watching movies, talking about art — at key times, these can have the potential for political activation.”

	<p>The authorities' primary motivation in moving forward with the cases is probably not suppressing these women in particular, but more generally warning others who might have drawn inspiration from the demonstrations.</p> <p>While there have been no large-scale repeats of the politically charged protests late last year, sporadic demonstrations on more discrete issues have continued in recent weeks. The government's about-face on "zero Covid" has led pandemic control workers to rally to demand unpaid wages. The soaring deaths and illness that have followed the sudden loosening could also stoke anger, said Steve Tsang, the director of the SOAS China Institute in London.</p> <p>"In the long term, the damage to the reputation and legitimacy of both the party and Xi Jinping, I think, is significant," Professor Tsang said. And having seen that damage turn into political protest, he added, "intimidation is basically what is being done to make sure that it doesn't come back."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Memphis police enacted reforms in 2020
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/memphis-police-reforms.html
GIST	<p>In 2020, the city of Memphis voted to require the Memphis Police Department to enact policies designed to reduce the use of excessive force by officers. The measures came in the wake of the high-profile killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor by law enforcement officers.</p> <p>The department eliminated the use of no-knock warrants. Officers were required to use de-escalation strategies and intervene if they saw others using excessive force, in accordance with 8 Can't Wait, a nationwide campaign to limit the use of force by police. They could shoot at a suspect only as a last resort and had to attempt to issue a verbal warning beforehand. And each time they used, or threatened to use, force against civilians, they had to report it. A ban against chokeholds was already in place, officials said in 2020.</p> <p>"I understand the frustrations that our citizens are feeling, and I realize the importance of transparency and accountability as we reform law enforcement nationwide," Michael Rallings, then the director of the Memphis Police Department, said in the summer of 2020, announcing reform measures.</p> <p>But the death of Tyre Nichols after a confrontation with five police officers, who have since been fired, shows that the work of reforming the department continues, said Van Turner, a lawyer and president of the Memphis branch of the N.A.A.C.P.</p> <p>"We need to find ways to better implement policies and training which are already on the books," said Mr. Turner, who served on the Shelby County Board of Commissioners, the county's legislative body, until last year and advocated for many of the police reforms enacted in 2020.</p> <p>The majority of the Memphis Police Department is Black, according to data published on a city website. Of nearly 2,000 commissioned officers, about 58 percent are Black, 37 percent are white and 3 percent are Hispanic.</p> <p>In recent years, as Memphis grappled with a spike in violent crime, local attention drifted away from police reforms, Mr. Turner said.</p> <p>In 2021, the city recorded a record number of murders, with 346, and the violent crime rate only marginally improved last year. The killings have stirred fear among residents and spurred calls to bolster the ranks of the department.</p> <p>"We're tired of the break-ins, the carjackings, the assaults," Mr. Turner said. "And so there was more support for law enforcement in the communities." But he said Mr. Nichols's death would renew focus on reform. "This takes it back up," he said.</p>

	<p>The department has drawn scrutiny over accusations of officer misconduct before. In 2021, William Skelton, a former Memphis police officer, was charged with official oppression involving the repeated pepper-spraying of a 28-year-old man while he was handcuffed. He has pleaded not guilty.</p> <p>In 2015, a man was stopped by a plainclothes police detective who had been following him in an unmarked car. The man, Daniel Jefferson Jr., said he did not realize the man following him was an officer and shot him in self-defense, according to an account by Mr. Jefferson that was in a report by internal investigators. Mr. Jefferson said that three other officers then took him into custody and beat him with table tennis paddles and a chair, according to the report. The officers denied the allegations. They were suspended without pay and criminal charges were never brought.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 When police allowed to use deadly force?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/police-deadly-excessive-force.html
GIST	<p>A federal civil rights investigation into the death of Tyre Nichols, a 29-year old Black man who died after a violent arrest by Memphis officers on Jan. 7, is prompting renewed attention to the use of excessive force against people, many of whom are young and Black.</p> <p>Since George Floyd's death in May 2020, many cities and towns have passed measures to change how officers operate, including laws requiring de-escalation, limiting the use of force and banning chokeholds.</p> <p>In Washington, the Justice in Policing Act passed in the House but languished in the Senate. It would have established a national use-of-force standard for police and overhauled qualified immunity protections for officers.</p> <p>Taken together, they still add up to the most far-reaching demand to transform policing in the nation's history. But the Supreme Court signaled in two rulings in October 2021 that it continued to support qualified immunity.</p> <p>Here's what we know about when officers can use deadly force.</p> <p>When does the law allow for deadly force?</p> <p>In 1989, the Supreme Court created a precedent that still dominates the legal approach to this question, finding in <i>Graham v. Connor</i> that when using force the police need only meet the standard of what a reasonable officer might do.</p> <p>"The calculus of reasonableness must embody allowance for the fact that police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments — in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving — about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation," Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist wrote in the majority opinion.</p> <p>Though this "split-second" standard allows judges and juries to question an officer's decisions, they are instructed not to use the benefit of hindsight. "The 'reasonableness' of a particular use of force must be judged from the perspective of a reasonable officer on the scene," the ruling says.</p> <p>Generally, officers are authorized to use lethal force only if they reasonably believe that a person poses a danger to the police or the public. In 1985, the Supreme Court ruled that it was not legal for officers to shoot fleeing suspects in the back solely to keep them from evading arrest, and later rulings asserted that a suspect's being armed does not, on its own, give an officer the right to shoot.</p> <p>So what does 'reasonable' actually mean?</p> <p>It can be broken down into two core components, said Sharon Fairley, a former federal prosecutor who led the Civilian Office of Police Accountability in Chicago.</p>

“The first question is: Was it necessary to use force at all?” she said. “And then the second question: Was the force that was used in proportion to the threat?”

The case of Derek Chauvin, the white police officer who was convicted on two counts of murder as well as manslaughter for kneeling on George Floyd, who died in the encounter, offers an example.

“According to some of the witnesses who took the stand, the act of putting him on the ground was probably seen as reasonable under the circumstances,” said Professor Fairley, who teaches at the University of Chicago Law School. “But when he represented no continuing threat to the officer, that’s when it became unreasonable.”

Most police departments’ use-of-force policies have explanations for how reasonableness is assessed, and give examples of the factors to be considered, she said. They usually explain the circumstances when force is allowed — for example, in response to a threat to an officer, or active resistance. They also specify what actions officers are not permitted to take, like using chokeholds or shooting into moving vehicles.

Officers are taught legal concepts and the specific components of the department’s policy, and most departments also include some kind of scenario-based training with live demonstrations or videos.

“Courts and juries may consider whether an officer’s conduct was consistent or inconsistent with his or her training,” Professor Fairley said.

How has footage from body cameras and cellphones changed policing?

A sea change occurred in the fall of 2014, when a grand jury in Ferguson, Mo., decided not to indict Officer Darren Wilson in the fatal shooting that summer of Michael Brown, an 18-year-old Black man. There was no footage of the shooting, and Mr. Brown’s family called for every police officer in the country to wear a body camera.

The Obama administration then committed to funding body camera programs across the U.S. Only a few dozen police departments were using cameras at that time; today the figure is around 10,000.

Some [research shows](#) a statistically significant reduction in use of force after body cameras are put into use. The cameras also appear to [reduce](#) the number of complaints from civilians, who know that their, actions, too, are being recorded.

As of 2021, at least 34 states and the District of Columbia had [passed laws](#) related to the public disclosure of body-worn camera footage, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. In Chicago, dashboard camera video captured Officer Jason Van Dyke shooting Laquan McDonald, a Black teenager, 16 times in October 2014. That video was played repeatedly for jurors, and Mr. Van Dyke became the first Chicago patrolman to be convicted of murder in almost 50 years.

Is use of force standardized across all police forces?

No, there are no national standards. There are about 18,000 police departments in the country, 80 percent of which have 50 officers or fewer, and each follows its own policy.

Are officers ever charged? And are they convicted?

Charges against officers are typically rare, but prosecutors have charged officers in several cities who were seen on camera using deadly force.

The officer who fatally shot Philando Castile, a 32-year-old Black man driving with his girlfriend and daughter in a suburb of Minnesota in 2016, was acquitted of manslaughter. The officer, who shot Mr. Castile five times at close range, killing him in the seat of his parked car, said he fired his weapon out of fear that Mr. Castile might have been reaching for a gun, a fear that was mistaken.

In Minneapolis, Mr. Chauvin could not defend his actions by claiming that Mr. Floyd's suffocation resulted from a split-second decision because video images and witness accounts showed that he continued to kneel on Mr. Floyd for more than nine minutes.

Does racial bias play a role?

The many critics of the split-second standard cite a litany of police shootings of Black people. They argue that implicit racial bias leads officers to fear potential danger from Black people more than white people in similar situations, and that it drives them to use deadly force disproportionately against Black people. Because the standard hinges on the police officer's perception of danger, critics say, it leads to racial disparities.

What are some proposed changes?

[More than 30 states have passed new police oversight and reform laws](#) — over 140 in all — according to a New York Times analysis of data from the National Conference of State Legislatures. Many of the laws — restricting the use of force, overhauling disciplinary systems, creating civilian review boards and requiring transparency around misconduct cases — give states far more influence over policing practices that have typically been left to local governments. A few states, including California, have even changed the legal standard for when officers can use deadly force from being “reasonable” to “necessary.”

Many of the country's 18,000 police departments have instituted policies banning or restricting the use of a chokehold.

An effort to pass sweeping federal legislation on police oversight issues was passed by the House last year but not by the Senate.

What do the police think of this?

The push for reform has begun to pare back the protections won for the police over the last half-century, and some police advocates argue that the new rules could violate officers' rights to defend themselves.

Police unions say that the split-second decision standard is essential to keeping officers and the public safe.

In April 2021, Ma'Khia Bryant, 16, who according to a [body-camera video](#) was wielding a knife and had threatened two girls, was fatally [shot by an officer in Columbus](#).

“If the officer doesn't act, there's a strong probability that an individual will be killed,” said Larry James, the general counsel for the Fraternal Order of Police, of the shooting.

“The officer is duty-bound to take that action to protect the life of another citizen or him or herself — that is the standard that police should be judged by, not Monday morning quarterbacking,” he added.

Police unions argue that the number of killings by police in the United States reflects a higher level of civilian violence fed by greater gun ownership. American police officers must resort to violence more, they say, partly because they encounter it more.

In other wealthy, developed nations, there is nothing comparable to the nearly 1,000 people who have been shot and killed by the police annually in recent years in the United States, according to [data](#) from The Washington Post, which also shows that officers fatally shot Black and Hispanic people at a much higher rate than they did whites.

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HEADLINE	01/27 Day 338 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/27/russia-ukraine-war-at-a-glance-what-we-know-on-day-338-of-the-invasion

GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ukrainian civilians raced for cover on Thursday as Russia fired a barrage of missiles and drones across the country, killing at least 11 people, a day after Kyiv won pledges of battlefield tanks to combat Moscow’s invasion from western countries. • Ukrainian government officials who shirk their duties during wartime will be quickly removed, a top aide to President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Thursday amid a crack down on corruption. More than a dozen officials have been removed this week after a series of scandals and graft allegations. Political analysts said Zelenskiy needs to show western partners and war-weary Ukrainians that he is serious about punishing misrule. • Ukrainian skeleton racer Vladyslav Heraskevych criticised the International Olympic Committee on Thursday for considering allowing Russian and Belarusian athletes to return to international competitions. • Russia’s finance ministry has proposed scrapping liquidity restrictions for spending on “anti-crisis” investments from its national wealth fund (NWF), citing the need to support key sectors amid challenging geopolitical conditions. • The UK hopes the Challenger 2 tanks it is supplying to Ukraine will arrive in the country at the end of March, defence department minister Alex Chalk said on Thursday. • Russian authorities designated the independent news outlet Meduza an “undesirable organisation” on Thursday, effectively outlawing the site from operating in Russia and banning any Russian from cooperating with Meduza or its journalists. • The Ukrainian central bank’s foreign currency reserves will stand at about \$30bn at the end of January, Yuri Heletiy, the deputy governor told reporters on Thursday, according to Reuters. • The arrest of a high-ranking Ukrainian intelligence agent accused of spying for Russia has highlighted the urgent need for a cleanout of the country’s key security service, a former deputy head of the agency has said. • Canada has confirmed that it will be sending 4 Leopard tanks to Ukrainian forces, the AFP reports.
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HEADLINE	01/26 DOH urgent plea for blood donations
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/departement-health-northwest-blood-coalition-asking-blood-donations/MPOH2IYNTFHQJN5O3TVRZTIG4A/
GIST	<p>The Washington State Department of Health and the Northwest Blood Coalition are urging eligible residents to donate blood this January for National Blood Donor Month.</p> <p>“Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood,” said Angel Montes, Donor Services Executive for Red Cross Northwest Region. “You can help patients in need by making a blood or platelet donation today.”</p> <p>The Department of Health said the state is at a critical level of need for blood donations, specifically from younger volunteers who are willing to commit to multiple donations a year. Most people who are in good health, are at least 18 years old and weigh at least 110 pounds can donate. Teens aged 16 and 17 can donate with signed permission forms.</p> <p>Donation opportunities are available through Red Cross, Bloodworks Northwest, Vitalant, and Cascade Regional Blood Centers.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Tacoma PD launches ‘Safe Place’ initiative
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/south-sound-news/tacoma-pd-launching-safe-place-initiative-victims-hate-crimes/Y3ZTARQOD5BIXOKYLHGEKMM5PY/
GIST	<p>TACOMA, Wash. — The Tacoma Police Department is launching a program to provide refuge to victims of hate crimes.</p> <p>It’s called the Safe Place Initiative and was started by the Seattle Police Department.</p>

The initiative is designed to address all hate crimes, including those crimes committed because of:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Ancestry
- National origin
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender expression or identity
- Mental, physical, or sensory disabilities
- Homelessness
- Marital status
- Political ideology
- Age
- Parental status

The department joins more than 275 other law enforcement agencies that have already launched the program.

It encourages local businesses, schools, and organizations to provide safety to victims of crime by: Calling 911 immediately if a victim of any crime — especially a hate crime — enters their premises. Allow the victim to remain on their property until police officers arrive.

Provide a description of the victim and suspect to police or emergency dispatchers as well as any additional information such as where the suspect was last seen and if anyone was hurt.

The program has no cost to the business, school, or organization. Participants are provided with a Safe Place window decal so the public will know the location is committed to fighting hate.

Businesses, schools, and organizations that would like to participate can [follow this link](#).

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HEADLINE	01/26 RV camp returns to Ballard shopping area
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/rv-camp-homeless-encampment-ballard-seattle-way-northwest-14th-avenue-us-foods-trader-joes-office-max-driving-business-restaurant-grocery-mayor-bruce-harrell-plan#
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — An RV camp has returned to Ballard in a busy shopping area weeks after the city cleared it.</p> <p>The city confirmed it last cleaned up the camp along Ballard Way near 14th Avenue in December, but some frustrated shoppers and business owners want a more permanent solution to help the homeless and clear their street.</p> <p>“Three weeks ago this place was beautiful, clean, swept,” Dan Anderson stated looking at Ballard Way, now lined with seven RVs, plus propane tanks and other belongings. “The city did a great job.”</p> <p>He and other locals said they’re frustrated the city’s interactive map tracking homeless camps was last updated in September. The dashboard lists this particular camp as “resolved,” though that’s not the case now.</p> <p>“It’s just disappointing,” Anderson continued. “We love this neighborhood, and this is where we have our families and our businesses, and it doesn’t feel good.”</p> <p>People like Joe Arya, who frequent this busy shopping area, said the camp is a revolving door of fire hazards and parking problems.</p>

"[I'm] trying to get in and out of this space when all the parking is taken along the street that's public parking," Arya explained. "It's unfair to us as business owners."

Anderson said he wants there to be repercussions for the campers, and also a safer place for them to go.

"The hardest part is it's affecting many businesses around here," Anderson began. "I feel bad for office max and the local breweries and all the shops. I bring my daughter down here a couple of times a week and I [have to] hold her close. You know, it doesn't feel safe."

KOMO asked a city spokesperson what more can the city do to keep this street clear and shelter people. And when could the city update the homelessness dashboard?

"There's got to be something different," Anderson said. "They spend millions of dollars on all these research reports, all these different ideas, but nobody's coming up with a solution that seems to work."

The city expects to notify RV owners to move in the next two weeks so crews can clear trash and debris as part of Seattle Public Utilities' remediation program.

In a statement, the city said staff is also reaching out to businesses and property owners in the area about strategies to help discourage long-term parking and future unauthorized encampments. Those conversations are ongoing.

According to city records, Ballard has one of the highest concentrations of RV encampments in the city. Duwamish/SODO tops the list at 69 encampments as of last September, the most recent data available. Ballard and North Beacon Hill each have 30 encampments, followed by Georgetown with 25.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Spokane Valley fire crews record year
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/money/economy/boomtown-inland-northwest/svfd-responds-record-number-incidents/293-e18f92d6-2046-4a29-8391-d7051af544a6
GIST	<p>SPOKANE VALLEY, Wash. — The Spokane Valley Fire Department said it's seeing the increased growth in the area in the increased incident calls. Spokane Valley Fire said 2022 was an unprecedented year for service. The department said crews responded to 23,200 incidents, the most in any year in its history.</p> <p>"The trajectory of our department is only getting bigger and busier in regards to our demand for service," Deputy Chief Zack Bond said.</p> <p>The department reported in 2022 that crews responded to nearly 23,240 incidents. Those incidents varied from structure fires to water rescues to car accidents, but nearly 19,000 incidents were for emergency medical services.</p> <p>"The biggest group of calls by classification or call type is calls for advance life support or ALS and we call that an EMS call or emergency medical services," Bond explained.</p> <p>Bond said meeting the demand for service can put a strain on supplies and crews.</p> <p>"It's the amount of work that we're able to put into that 24-hour period that is being affected," Bond said. "Clearly we're using more diesel fuel, clearly we're using more supplies to be able to do what we need to do, but in terms of personnel, we're just working our firefighters harder and harder."</p> <p>The department said the number of calls and cost of diesel fuel has taken a toll on the annual budget.</p> <p>The department projects fuel costs will put them 40% over budget for 2022.</p>

	<p>The department said 2021 fuel costs caused the department to go 14% over budget and 2020, the department was on budget.</p> <p>This is all while having less equipment in service.</p> <p>"We're actually running one less heavy piece of equipment than we were back in 2013," Bond began. "But for comparison sake, back in 2013, this department ran about 13,000 calls. So, we've increased service by 10,000 calls per year with one less heavy piece of equipment to provide that service."</p> <p>Despite the added pressure of increased calls, bond says firefighters will continue to respond wherever and whenever needed.</p> <p>"The way that firefighters are is that we're going to take it head on and do the work that needs to be done," Bond shared.</p> <p>To help meet rising demand, SVFD is asking Spokane Valley voters to renew the Maintenance and Operations levy on February 14.</p> <p>The department said the levy keeps stations open, replaces old equipment and hires more firefighters.</p> <p>The vote would secure funding for the next four years.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Tacoma business builds boats for Ukraine
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/business/article271696612.html
GIST	<p>While much has been made of newly announced tank shipments from the United States and Germany to help Ukraine defend itself against Russia, another Ukraine project quietly has come to life in Tacoma.</p> <p>Bremerton-based SAFE Boats is creating and outfitting eight Mark VI patrol boats in a \$100 million contract with the U.S. Navy for Ukraine.</p> <p>The Port of Tacoma this week released video showing port tenant SAFE Boats International receiving the hull of the first patrol boat at its Earley Business Center site.</p> <p>The work is the result of plans in the works long before Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.</p> <p>In June 2020, the Department of Defense announced Ukraine was set to purchase up to \$600 million in military patrol boats and related equipment. The SAFE Boats Mark VI is an 85-foot patrol boat previously only used by the U.S. Navy.</p> <p>The News Tribune reported in March 2021 that the company would reopen its Port of Tacoma manufacturing operation and add new maritime jobs for the patrol boat work.</p> <p>The Tacoma port site is where SAFE Boat vessels larger than 65-feet in length are produced.</p> <p>The location originally was designed for WWII naval ship production, according to SAFE Boat's website.</p> <p>At its busiest in World War II, the port's shipyard employed 33,000 workers and built 74 ships, including escort aircraft carriers, tankers and cargo ships, according to a 2012 News Tribune report covering SAFE Boat's initial entry into the Tacoma market.</p> <p>The site is owned by the port and named the Earley Business Center in memory of former port commissioner Bob Earley.</p>

“The facility provides an ideal location to produce, launch, test and support large craft,” SAFE Boats noted on its website.

SAFE Boats has manufactured vessels for naval operations and first responders in almost 70 countries, including Ukraine.

In 2021, SAFE Boats CEO Richard Schwarz said the company has been working toward reopening its Tacoma facility for more than three years.

The site had been shuttered after its initial contract with the Navy was fulfilled.

“This is an incredible example of a true partnership which will create jobs and generate economic growth for the region while supporting national security and foreign policy objectives,” he said at the time.

Those sentiments now carry added weight.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has seen NATO countries led by the United States ramping up deliveries of military equipment to aid the country.

Those shipments include M1A2 Abrams tanks from the United States and Leopard tanks from Germany, announced in recent days.

WHAT’S NEXT

Schwarz told The News Tribune on Thursday that the first boat arrived in Tacoma on Jan. 11, and a second boat is set to arrive in March.

“We will be outfitting both of those boats in our Tacoma facility,” he said via email. The rest of the boats will be built “entirely within our facility. We will begin fabricating (welding) the third boat in March.”

He said the company expects the first two boats to be complete “before the end of the year and will be working with the U.S. Navy to determine how and when those boats will be delivered to Ukraine.”

SAFE Boats now has 25 people working at its Tacoma facility, with plans to add about 40 more workers in the coming months, Schwarz wrote.

“Almost all of the production activity for these boats will occur in Tacoma although some of the supporting functions (engineering, logistics, etc.) will be performed by our Bremerton-based team,” he added.

The work doesn’t stop there, he noted. “In the future we expect to expand production in Tacoma to include other large vessels for both military and commercial use, including vessels supporting offshore wind.”

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HEADLINE	01/26 Cold snap plummets over western WA
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/weather-news/article271697777.html
GIST	<p>The mercury will take a plunge this weekend, bringing three days of below-freezing temperatures to the Tacoma and Olympia areas.</p> <p>The National Weather Service said an Arctic cold front coming south through British Columbia’s Fraser Valley will settle in over Western Washington beginning Saturday night.</p> <p>The entire West Coast will be impacted by the cold, said NWS meteorologist Dev McMillian.</p> <p>WIND THEN COLD</p> <p>Ushering in the cold front will be a northeasterly wind beginning Saturday night, McMillian said.</p>

	<p>While Whatcom County and points north will feel the brunt of the front, Pierce and Thurston counties will have sustained winds of 5 to 15 miles per hour.</p> <p>Temperatures will plummet to a low of 26 for Tacoma on Sunday night. Monday's high will creep above freezing only to fall again to 26. Tuesday night's low should hover at 32 before the cold snap eases for the rest of the week.</p> <p>Highs will hit at about 38 degrees Sunday through Monday before heading back into the 40s Wednesday.</p> <p>SUNNY SIDE The bright side to the coming freeze is sun. Sunday and Monday are both forecast to be sunny. Clouds will return on Tuesday.</p> <p>It'll be a mixed bag on Washington's coast this weekend. Saturday could be wet and windy while Sunday looks to be sunny with a high of 40 degrees at Long Beach.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/25 Oregon primate research facility scrutiny
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/oregon-primate-research-facility-under-scrutiny-17742012.php
GIST	<p>SALEM, Ore. (AP) — A state lawmaker in Oregon is using thousands of pages of redacted documents he sought for more than a year to launch legislation demanding more accountability and oversight of a primate research facility with a long history of complaints.</p> <p>Incidents at the Oregon National Primate Research Center, associated with Oregon's largest hospital, include one in which two monkeys died after being placed into a scalding cage-washing system. Other animals perished from neglect. Workers have low morale, some have been drinking on the job, and dozens have complained about dysfunctional leadership, the documents show.</p> <p>The problems at the facility in suburban Portland, Oregon, have surfaced amid a sharp debate between animal rights activists who believe experimenting on animals is unethical and researchers who say the experiments save and improve human lives.</p> <p>The U.S. moved a small step away from animal testing when Congress passed a bill, signed into law by President Joe Biden in December, that eliminated the requirement that drugs in development undergo testing on animals before being provided in human trials. Advocates want computer modeling and organ chip technology to be used instead, though the Food and Drug Agency Administration can still require animal tests.</p> <p>"Reasonable people can disagree on whether using animals for medical research is scientifically valid or ethical," Oregon Rep. David Gomberg said in an interview. "But we have to agree that it's not being done very well here in Oregon."</p> <p>After the scalding incident, Gomberg filed a public records request to learn more about the research center. He had to wait for 17 months and pay a \$1,000 fee to obtain thousands of pages of redacted internal documents.</p> <p>The documents revealed that dozens of center employees warned that a leadership culture which cuts corners, deflects responsibility and lacks accountability sets the stage for other tragedies.</p> <p>Gomberg is now behind a bill in the Oregon Legislature calling for greater transparency, accountability and oversight of the center, which is run by Oregon Health & Science University.</p> <p>Asked to comment on the issues raised by Gomberg, OHSU sent a statement from Peter Barr-Gillespie, the university's chief research officer and executive vice president, in which he said faculty and staff at the</p>

primate center “understand and embrace the responsibility to provide compassionate and leading-edge veterinary care that comes with the privilege of working with animals.”

“While human error and the unpredictable behavior of undomesticated animals are impossible to completely eliminate, we strive to do everything in our power to employ best practices in engineering, training and supervision to protect against them,” Barr-Gillespie said.

The Oregon facility was cited for more violations between 2014 and 2022 — with 31 violations of the federal Animal Welfare Act — than any of the six other primate research centers funded by the National Institutes of Health, according to a Jan. 19 report from InvestigateWest, a Seattle-based investigative journalism nonprofit.

The other NIH-funded centers are run by the University of California-Davis, the University of Washington, Tulane University, the Texas Biomedical Research Institute, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Emory University.

In their petition, the Oregon employees — whose names were redacted in the version obtained by Gomberg — said they were devastated by the deaths of the two monkeys, named Earthquake and Whimsy, in August 2020. One of the monkeys died from the scalding water after the cage it was in was accidentally placed in an industrial washing machine. The other survived but had to be euthanized because of its injuries.

“Many of us now grapple with doubts about our purposes here and about our investments in our careers. Our love for these animals leaves us torn between a deep sense of responsibility for stewarding these animals’ welfare and a profound uncertainty of (leadership’s) willingness to enact meaningful reform,” the employees wrote.

Gomberg said Oregon Health & Science University, or OHSU, has resisted outside scrutiny.

“My focus with this legislation is simply on accountability and transparency and letting the public know exactly what’s going on at this facility,” Gomberg said.

When People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals also sought public records, OHSU unreasonably withheld photos and video, a Multnomah County Circuit Court judge ruled last July.

Furthermore, university police used a contractor — Pennsylvania-based Information Network Associates, which was founded by a former FBI special agent — to provide information on the animal welfare group’s activities and political and social views. Judge Andrew Lavin ordered the university to delete the information, saying the practice violated state law that bans police surveillance unrelated to criminal investigations.

In October, OHSU agreed to pay \$37,900 to settle a federal fine for Animal Welfare Act violations between 2018 and 2021, including incidents in which a monkey was euthanized after its head got caught between two PVC pipes; voles who died of thirst; gerbils who died of starvation; and the scalding incident.

Barr-Gillespie said appropriate measures are taken to prevent a recurrence of incidents and that animal studies are conducted only when other methods are inadequate or too dangerous for human participants.

Research at the Oregon center has contributed to a compound that promotes the rebuilding of the protective sheath around nerve cells that is damaged in conditions such as multiple sclerosis, identification of a gene that could lead to development of medication to prevent and treat alcoholism and improved understanding of brain injury and repair, among many other advances, Barr-Gillespie said.

Gomberg, though, said “there are systemic problems within the institution that need to be addressed.”

	"I haven't seen anything that indicates to me that there aren't more problems on the horizon," the lawmaker said.
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HEADLINE	01/26 SPD slow on info: patrol car kills pedestrian
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/what-seattle-police-has-said-about-pedestrian-killed-by-cop-what-remains-unanswered/
GIST	<p>A Seattle police officer driving to a call Monday night struck and killed Jaahnavi Kandula, 23, who was in crosswalk at a South Lake Union intersection when she was hit.</p> <p>The Seattle Police Department was slow to release information Monday and did not confirm Kandula, a student at Northeastern University's Seattle campus, had died until nearly 18 hours after she was hit.</p> <p>In the days since her death, the department has shared few details about the moments leading up to the crash, citing an active investigation by the traffic collision investigation squad.</p> <p>SPD did not release new information Thursday, but in a statement, said it would provide "all publicly releasable" information once "able to do so," in consultation with Kandula's family.</p> <p>"We want to acknowledge the many questions we are receiving regarding the collision Monday night between an SPD officer and a pedestrian. As is the case with any serious motor vehicle collision, this incident is under investigation by SPD's Traffic Collision Investigation Squad, consistent with SPD policy," said the statement posted on its online blotter.</p> <p>"We extend our deepest condolences to Ms. Kandula's family and friends. This incident is a terrible tragedy for everyone involved."</p> <p>Here's what we know so far and what remains unanswered.</p> <p>What police department has said</p> <p>In an online blotter post shortly before 11:30 p.m. Monday, SPD said a pedestrian was hit by an officer in a marked patrol SUV at the intersection of Thomas Street and Dexter Avenue North. She was located by officers at 8 p.m. Monday and taken to Harborview Medical Center in critical condition.</p> <p>The King Medical Examiner's Office said she died Monday night from multiple blunt force injuries.</p> <p>Police didn't provide an update until nearly 2 p.m. Tuesday, when the post was updated to say the pedestrian had died. Police declined to name the officer but said he has been with the department since November 2019.</p> <p>SPD told The Seattle Times on Wednesday that Kandula was crossing from east to west in the crosswalk when she was hit.</p> <p>The department has not released details such as the name of the officer, the speed he was driving, precisely where Kandula was hit or if the officer remained at the scene.</p> <p>The officer won't be working his next shift, but instead will be taking a "release day," Detective Valerie Carson, a police spokesperson, said Tuesday. Release days are part of SPD's officer wellness program after "traumatic or upsetting" incidents. They must be approved by the officer's chain of command.</p> <p>It is not clear how long the officer will be taking release days or if he will be placed on leave while the investigation continues.</p> <p>What Kandula's family has said</p>

	<p>Kandula's uncle, Ashok Mandula, said he and his wife got the call in their Houston home Monday night. They booked a flight to Seattle that night and are now in the city, working to take Kandula's body back to India.</p> <p>When he arrived in Seattle, Mandula visited the intersection where Kandula was killed, just several blocks from the university campus.</p> <p>Mandula planned to visit the police department Wednesday, and said he wants to find out exactly what happened.</p> <p>"Our first priority is to get her home so her family can see her," he said.</p> <p>Kandula, from Adoni, India, came to the U.S. in 2021, and was attending the Northeastern University campus in South Lake Union. She was on track to receive a master's in information systems this December. Kandula and her sister were raised by a single mother, an elementary school teacher.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 New federal money for Washington ferries
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/transportation/what-new-federal-money-will-mean-for-wa-ferries/
GIST	<p>The federal government has awarded Washington State Ferries \$4.9 million to help build an electric-ferry charging station for the busy Mukilteo-Clinton line, and \$5 million for dock improvements to improve transit and pedestrian connections at Southworth.</p> <p>Those grants, along with \$1.7 million for WSF to buy modern ferry-payment software and systems that make credit-card transactions quicker, were announced Thursday morning by the Federal Transit Administration.</p> <p>FTA's latest ferry spending represents a modest sum that might help Puget Sound agencies get moving on new projects, and displays the federal government's new zeal to subsidize cleaner transportation.</p> <p>Washington state can seek greater contributions later, for its massive electrification program affecting boats and terminals across Puget Sound. New hybrid ferries will run mainly on rechargeable batteries rather than diesel.</p> <p>The \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework, passed by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden in 2021, provides \$250 million over five years for converting diesel ferries to cleaner fuels, and a federal share of up to 85% for clean ferries projects.</p> <p>Washington state's ferry electrification plan calls for 16 new or converted boats, along with charging stations throughout Puget Sound. Lawmakers have earmarked \$1.33 billion to build five boats, paid by future carbon taxes and license fees. But WSF's original timeline, to launch the first hybrid by 2024 at Vigor shipyard in Seattle, collapsed. The state and the company didn't agree on price, according to the trade website MarineLink. The state will solicit new bids soon, hoping that other boatbuilders can create or expand facilities in Washington state.</p> <p>Ferries Director Patty Rubstello said this month the next 144-car hybrid ferry, Wishkah, isn't expected until 2027, so mechanics must nurse the aging fleet longer.</p> <p>Before then, the state still expects to convert the ferry Wenatchee from diesel to hybrid power by 2024, followed by the Tacoma and Puyallup.</p> <p>The Wishkah is intended to serve the Mukilteo-Clinton route, where the \$4.9 million federal aid will cover more than one-quarter of the state's estimated \$19.3 million cost to build charging connections, transformers and power cables at Clinton, on the south end of Whidbey Island.</p>

Hooking up can be a challenge, amid changing tides and waves.

WSF will install charging stations a few yards offshore at each dock, where mobile arms will pivot and stretch toward arriving ferries, to be plugged into the boats, said spokesperson Suanne Pelley.

Electric ferry power at Clinton is scheduled for 2027, while Seattle and Bainbridge would be equipped by 2026 or 2027, she said.

State ferries are traditionally links in the state highway network, and designed to move cars over water. However, the FTA counts walk-on passengers as transit customers. (WSF carried 17.4 million people last year, of which 3.4 million, or 18%, walked or biked aboard.)

Mukilteo-Clinton ranks near the bottom for walk-ons at 6%. Efforts are underway to change that, including the longhouse-shaped [Mukilteo passenger terminal](#) finished two years ago.

“Obviously with the beauty of the area there, any greenhouse gases we can take out of the atmosphere will be better for the environment and the quality of life,” said FTA spokesperson Paul Kincaid.

The Southworth dock, where ferries depart to Vashon Island and West Seattle, will be equipped with accessible facilities to meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards, according to FTA’s award list.

Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash., hailed the electrification funds and said nearly 800,000 yearly passengers will find a better experience at Southworth. “I will continue to fight for more federal dollars for future funding to help and maintain and upgrade our world-class ferry system,” she said Thursday morning.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., commented that “with these grants, we can improve efficiency, lower emissions, and get families safely from Point A to Point B.”

Washington’s three grants are among 23 nationwide that totaled \$384 million, of which Alaska will receive \$286 million to sustain its vast rural network. Other projects include electric conversions of New Jersey Transit boats, new facilities serving Beaver Island, Michigan, and maintenance funds for ferries off the Maine coast.

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HEADLINE	01/26 King Co. plan: \$8B to end homelessness?
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/ending-homelessness-in-king-county-will-cost-billions-regional-authority-says/
GIST	<p>What would it take to end homelessness in King County? More than Seattle and county budgets have ever allocated. And more than double what Gov. Jay Inslee has proposed to address homelessness throughout the entire state.</p> <p>The King County Regional Homelessness Authority estimates it would take more than \$8 billion in capital costs, up to \$3.5 billion in annual operating costs and tens of thousands more units of housing.</p> <p>Local officials say that these numbers, released this week in the authority’s proposed five-year plan, are likely not far off — but are also likely beyond what they are able to fund.</p> <p>The draft plan is intended to unite Seattle, King County and 38 other Puget Sound cities under one road map to tackle homelessness. The document comes more than two years into the authority’s existence, and is its first foundational guide to direct policy and budget.</p> <p>Officials and the public will have the opportunity to weigh in and refine the proposal over the next few months before it is expected to be finalized in April.</p> <p>The draft focuses heavily on reducing the number of people living on the streets, in tents and vehicles.</p>

Authority CEO Marc Dones said the county could end unsheltered homelessness within five years if the document is followed exactly and macroeconomic conditions don't dramatically change.

"We keep having the conversation at the absolute wrong scale," Dones said. "My job is not to mislead the public, is not to mislead anyone about what it is we're up against."

It's not clear where the money would come from, but Dones said local jurisdictions would likely need the help of an appropriation from Congress.

The city of Seattle is the authority's largest funder, to the tune of \$95 million of the agency's \$253 million budget. But the city is [facing dire revenue forecasts for 2023](#), and even the [\\$4 billion Inslee has proposed to build new housing](#) to address homelessness throughout the state would not come close to the amount the plan says is needed for just King County.

Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell's office wrote that he and the city "made clear our commitment to addressing this crisis with urgency and available resources" by increasing the city's investment in the authority in 2023 despite a budget deficit.

Harrell said he looks forward to better understanding how funding from different sources can be applied to realistically meet budget expectations.

"Is it achievable? Pretty lofty goals. Pretty monumental task," said Redmond Mayor Angela Birney, a member of the authority's governing committee.

More, different shelter needed

The centerpiece of the plan focuses on building 18,205 new units of temporary housing. The county currently has 4,148 temporary sleeping spaces, according to the authority.

The new temporary housing alone would cost \$6.6 billion over five years with more than \$1 billion in annual operating costs thereafter.

Authority officials used modeling from the Washington State Department of Commerce to determine how many units they'd need based on an estimate of the number of people who experience homelessness annually in King County. The authority paired data with interviews with hundreds of people experiencing homelessness about what types of housing models they have used and prefer.

They say that less temporary housing could be needed if more affordable permanent housing is added.

The plan proposes not only scaling up the county's homelessness system but changing its composition too. Dones said that will also alleviate the number of people in crisis visible on the street.

"When we walk around and see folks who are in really severe states of distress, that's because we don't have a thing for those folks," Dones said.

For example, shelters specifically designed for people with medical, mental health or substance use treatment needs currently constitute 1% of existing temporary housing space.

That doesn't come close to the need for those types of units in King County, where approximately half of homeless people have a chronic health issue, 31% have a mental health disorder, and 37% live with a substance use disorder, according to the 2022 point-in-time count.

Less than 4% of available shelter is in parking spaces for people living in vehicles. According to the authority, approximately half of unsheltered homeless people and close to 80% of unsheltered families with children in the county are living in vehicles.

Dones also said the authority will continue the region's shift away from large-scale shelters, where people stay in close proximity, to spaces like motels. They said they do not plan to abandon any of the resources the county already has, but will help crowded shelters convert into more individualized spaces.

"We just really need to be very mindful of what are people saying yes to and how do we have more of that?" Dones said.

Getting everybody on board

The plan will end the existing contracts with nonprofit organizations that receive money from the authority to provide outreach services, operate shelter and distribute resources and other homeless services. Those organizations would have to rebid for contracts, in what Dones said is an effort "to really orient the system to be an engine to get people inside really rapidly."

They said this would be a phased approach in communication with service providers so that organizations are neither surprised nor facing sudden cuts.

Chloe Gale, executive director of one of Seattle's primary homeless outreach organizations, REACH, said she is not worried and supports the direction that the authority wants to shift the system.

"It's going to be an ever-evolving field. We have to keep improving all of our practices across the board all the time because it's such an urgent, critical need," Gale said.

Other goals in the authority's plan include focusing on specific subgroups within homelessness: Black and Indigenous people and other people of color, as well as LGBTQ+ people who face disproportionate rates of homelessness, families with children, and youth and young adults.

Daniel Malone, executive director of Downtown Emergency Service Center, one the largest homelessness service providers in the county, also supports the plan, saying the dollar figure might be shocking.

"There's going to be a lot of surprise and perhaps immediate dismissal of what they're saying, because of the cost," Malone said. "But I am clear that you don't solve a problem without fully describing what it is and what it's going to take to fix it."

Officials have not quite balked at those numbers, though some have expressed concern.

Nancy Backus, Auburn mayor and governing committee member, called the figure "an incredibly large amount of money and very scary," but said it was likely an accurate estimate of the cost it would take to end unsheltered homelessness.

King County Executive Dow Constantine's office suggested he may want to see a pared down version of the plan in the final version.

"There is still a lot of work to be done as the plan moves forward, including identifying the fiscal scope and the balance of temporary and permanent housing," Constantine's office wrote in a statement.

In the authority's implementation board meeting Wednesday, several members more strongly objected to the dollar figures proposed in the five-year plan.

"We do not have \$7 billion in the immediate term," said board member Benjamin Maritz, co-author of an oft-cited 2020 McKinsey report that said King County might need to spend over \$1 billion every year for a decade to meaningfully address homelessness.

Maritz, along with other board members, told the authority it should outline a plan that does not rely on funding that does not currently exist.

The authority is accepting community feedback on the document on its website until Feb. 8.

	"My hope is that come April, we have a plan that the whole community is largely behind," Dones said.
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HEADLINE	01/26 DOH okays license Lynnwood opioid center
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/money/business/license-lynnwood-opioid-center-approved/281-050f744d-2bc6-4684-bdda-22c63d5c3911
GIST	<p>LYNNWOOD, Wash. — A controversial opioid treatment facility in Lynnwood received the license it needs to provide its services from the Department of Health.</p> <p>The Department of Health issued a behavioral health agency license to Acadia Health, despite pushback from some in the community.</p> <p>Acadia Health, one of the largest treatment centers in the county, is relocating its Bothell facility to Lynnwood after the building was sold. Acadia previously said it currently has 100 patients within five minutes of the site in Lynnwood, adding there is a need in the area, citing 18% of overdose deaths come from Snohomish County.</p> <p>Some people previously pushed back on the treatment clinic, with parents raising concern that it will be located near the Alderwood Boys & Girls Club.</p> <p>Lynnwood City Council President George Hurst previously expressed concerns as well.</p> <p>"They're good but this is just the wrong place for it. If Lynnwood wants one or will have one and I think they should be, I'm thinking along Highway 99 in a light industrial area," Hurst said.</p> <p>Opioid treatment centers are considered essential public facilities. The city council said by state law there's nothing they can do to stop it.</p> <p>Acadia Health previously addressed safety concerns and said it hires security guards if needed. Bothell police said they aren't often called to the clinic, but said they suspect they do not get called for minor offenses so they don't scare people away who need help.</p> <p>In a statement, the Department of Health said it recognizes there are concerns about the location of the clinic, however, "site approval is a role for local government, and the department has no role in that decision."</p> <p>"This clinic is moving only a short distance from its previous location, and has hundreds of existing clients, many of whom live in community near the new location and need access to continued treatment. These clients are neighbors, family members, co-workers and friends who are working to stay in recovery."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 AG sues Providence Hospitals over billing
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/health/wa-attorney-general-sues-providence-hospitals/281-2af76047-b48a-4fb4-b9e7-f031d6f68936
GIST	<p>EVERETT, Wash. — Washington state Attorney General Bob Ferguson said a hearing is set for Friday, Jan. 27 in a legal case alleging Providence hospitals used "unfair and deceptive" medical billing practices for low-income patients.</p> <p>Providence denies the allegations, saying it holds all to the "highest standards and do not condone billing or collection practices that take advantage of the patients we serve, especially those who are vulnerable."</p>

Ferguson [filed the suit](#) in 2022, and plans to argue in an upcoming hearing that 36,000 patients that were eligible for charity care were wrongfully sent to debt collectors.

"Washington state law is explicit that many Washingtonians qualify for something called [charity care](#), in other words, reduced medical expenses," Ferguson said. "In this case, Providence simply, flagrantly ignored those laws and literally sent tens of thousands of Washingtonians that would have been sent to debt collectors to collect on debt they never should have owed."

When Alexandra Nyfors of Everett faced a two-week hospital stay in a Providence-run facility due to an infection, kidney failure and associated issues, she said the medical care itself was excellent -- but the billing process that followed brought hardship.

"The care I got was first-rate, particularly the nurses were just wonderful - and I got better, I'm not well but I'm better, well enough to be home and living my life," Nyfors said. "The billing practices are awful. They just didn't pay any attention to anything except 'Give us our money'."

Nyfors says her initial hospital bill was more than \$86,000, and after insurance was whittled down to around \$2,000 -- an amount she still could not afford on a fixed income. She was able to secure an installment payment plan, but says she was never told she was eligible for free or reduced costs under the state's Charity Care Act. Instead, she found a way to pay each month -- she says, skimping on heating bills to afford the fees.

"I wasn't buying much in the way of groceries so I was cold, I was not getting a reasonable diet because that's what you buy when you don't have money," Nyfors said.

Nyfors learned through media coverage of the Attorney General's lawsuit that she may be eligible for the Charity Care Act. She contacted a reporter with the Everett Herald, and says after [coverage of her case](#), Providence contacted her with information about the CCA and paid her back. Still, she agreed to take part in a lawsuit regarding the issue -- saying she'd like to see better patient notification about the CCA, and hospital personnel assigned to working with patients on billing.

"It seems to me that what needs to change is, it needs to be somebody's responsibility in the hospital system, when a patient comes in to find out what their income is and if they qualify for Charity Care make sure they get it," Nyfors said. "That's part of caring for your patients and it seems to me is that's the part of care that's been completely dropped by the hospital system."

The attorney general's lawsuit asks for restitution, damages and corporate reform.

"We know medical debt is a key driver for homelessness and economic insecurity and the idea that an entity this size and sophistication of Providence would ignore this law to the tune of sending 36,000 Washingtonians to debt collectors that never should have been sent to debt collection, it's why we have my office, so we can stand up for those Washingtonians -- and that's why we're in court taking them on."

Here's the full statement from a Providence spokesperson:

"Providence is driven by a belief that health is a human right and remains focused on ensuring that financial hardship never gets in the way of accessing care or the healing process. We hold ourselves to the highest standards and do not condone billing or collection practices that take advantage of the patients we serve, especially those who are vulnerable."

According to the Washington Department of Health, Providence is the largest provider of charity care in the state of Washington. In 2021, we provided \$75 million in free or discounted care and \$663 million in total community benefit across the state. Our charity care policies meet, and in many cases exceed, federal and state law.

The discussion in today's NYT Daily is a recap of a New York Times article from last October. We do not believe the podcast or the article are an accurate reflection of who we are as an organization. That said,

	<i>we take these allegations very seriously and are continuously working to improve our charity care practices to ensure patients get the financial assistance they need."</i>
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HEADLINE	01/26 WA new tax code an income tax?
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/politics/state-politics/supreme-court-washington-state-tax-code/281-069a713e-dd54-4abd-a57c-c6e5121d5c00
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — An effort to balance what is considered the nation's most regressive state tax code came before the Washington Supreme Court on Thursday, in a case that could overturn a prohibition on income taxes that dates to the 1930s.</p> <p>Washington is one of nine states without an income tax, and its heavy reliance on sales and fuel taxes to pay for schools, roads and other public expenses falls disproportionately on low-income residents.</p> <p>They pay at least six times more in taxes as a percentage of household income than the wealthiest residents do, according to lawmakers, and middle-income residents pay two to four times as much.</p> <p>Democrats in Olympia, led by Gov. Jay Inslee, sought to begin addressing that in 2021, when they enacted a 7% capital gains tax on the sale of stocks, bonds and other high-end assets, with exemptions for the first \$250,000 each year and gains from sales of retirement accounts, real estate and certain small businesses.</p> <p>It was expected to be paid by 7,000 people — fewer than 1 in every 1,000 residents — and to bring in close to a half-billion dollars a year to help pay for public education in Washington. But it faces a legal challenge from wealthy residents and business and agricultural organizations, who say it violates the state and federal constitutions and makes for bad policy to boot.</p> <p>"Washington's unique, unprecedented and unconstitutional tax on capital gains will discourage our state's resident entrepreneurs and investors from investing in new and expanded businesses in our state," the Building Industry Association of Washington and Washington Retail Association wrote in a friend-of-the-court brief. "It will also cause significant numbers of individual business owners to leave Washington to avoid the new tax."</p> <p>Among the key issues during Thursday's hourlong arguments before the justices was whether the new tax is, as the state insists, an excise tax — broadly defined as a tax on certain goods, services or activities — or an income tax, which the court long ago held unconstitutional in Washington.</p> <p>Voters overwhelmingly passed a graduated income tax in 1932. But in a 5-4 decision the following year, the state Supreme Court struck it down, ruling that a tax on income was a tax on property — and the state Constitution says property taxes must be uniform and limited to 1% per year.</p> <p>Last year, Douglas County Superior Court Judge Brian Huber in central Washington sided with those challenging the capital gains tax as a forbidden income tax. Democratic Attorney General Bob Ferguson appealed, saying Huber got it wrong because the tax is not on property — it's on what an owner does with that property by selling it.</p> <p>The Edmonds School District and Washington Education Association, which intervened in the case on behalf of the state, said it agreed that the capital gains tax is an excise tax. But, they said, if the justices disagree and find that it is an income tax, then they should overturn their nearly century-old holding that an income tax is a tax on property.</p> <p>Unlike property, income isn't something that is owned and can be sold, their lawyers wrote: "This Court's cases holding that an income tax is a property tax were wrong when decided and they are wrong now."</p> <p>The arguments came as progressives are making a push in several states to have the rich pay more in taxes. Bills announced this month in California, New York, Illinois, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, Washington</p>

and Connecticut all revolve around the idea that the richest Americans need to pay more. But the proposals all face questionable prospects.

Those challenging Washington's capital gains tax argue the state's labeling of the capital gains tax as an excise tax is merely designed to conceal its true nature as an income tax.

The challengers also say it might apply even if the taxpayer takes no action to generate their gains — in other words, they are taxed simply because they own the asset. A Washington resident who owns shares in an out-of-state company might benefit if the board of directors decides to sell major assets, with revenue passed on to shareholders.

That's no different from the state's inheritance tax, which the court has upheld, Washington Solicitor General Noah Purcell argued. People can owe that excise tax simply by receiving money from someone who died out of state, he said.

Some 41 states tax capital gains as income. Seven other states have no income taxes at all: Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas and Wyoming. New Hampshire taxes only dividends and interest income earned by individual taxpayers.

The challengers noted that since the 1930s, Washington's voters have 10 times rejected constitutional amendments or initiatives in favor of income taxes.

If Washington wants such a tax, "the way forward is to amend the Constitution," former Republican Attorney General Rob McKenna argued on behalf of the challengers.

It wasn't clear how soon the justices might rule. The court is allowing the state to collect the tax beginning in April pending a decision, but Purcell urged them to issue a ruling quickly so the Legislature, which is in session, knows whether it can spend the money.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Major cities brace for possible violence
SOURCE	https://www.foxnews.com/politics/major-us-cities-brace-possible-violence-atlanta-riots-tyre-nichols-video
GIST	<p>Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp issued a state of emergency order Thursday ahead of potential protests in Atlanta over the weekend in an effort to prevent the unrest and chaos that occurred during last week's riots.</p> <p>The order calls for 1,000 National Guard troops to be called up. It expires on Feb. 9.</p> <p>"Georgians respect peaceful protests, but do not tolerate acts of violence against person or property," the order states.</p> <p>The order said the state of emergency was declared because of "unlawful assemblage, violence, overt threats of violence, disruption of the peace and tranquility of this state and danger existing to persons and property."</p> <p>The move comes after demonstrators took to the streets in Atlanta last weekend to protest the death of 26-year-old environmental activist Manuel Esteban Paez Teran. He was shot and killed by the Georgia State Patrol after authorities said Teran shot and wounded a state trooper who was trying to clear protesters from the construction site of a new public safety training center dubbed by activists as "Cop City."</p> <p>That area is the planned site for the Atlanta Public Safety Training Center and has come under fierce opposition from demonstrators.</p> <p>In Atlanta, some businesses were damaged as rioters threw rocks and bricks at windows. Masked activists dressed in all black threw rocks and lit fireworks in front of a skyscraper that houses the Atlanta Police</p>

[Foundation](#), shattering large glass windows. Walls were also vandalized with anti-police graffiti as stunned tourists scattered.

Some of those arrested were found with explosives.

At least six people are charged with domestic terrorism related to the riots.

They were identified as Ivan Ferguson, 23, of Nevada, 20-year-old Graham Evatt of Decatur, Georgia, Nadja Geier, 24, of Nashville, Tennessee; Madeleine Feola, 22, of Spokane, Washington; Francis Carrol, 22, of Kennebunkport, Maine; and Emily Murphy, 37, of Grosse Isle, Michigan.

Meanwhile, police departments in major cities like Austin, Texas, Los Angeles, California and Washington, D.C., were preparing for possible unrest in anticipation of the [Friday release](#) of a video depicting a confrontation between five Memphis police officers and 29-year-old Tyre Nichols, who died three days later.

The Austin Police Department told Fox News Digital it was monitoring events in Memphis and its officers "will be moving into tactical alert status beginning Friday morning." A law enforcement source told Fox News Digital the Los Angeles Police Department has units on standby.

"The Metropolitan Police Department has been briefed from law enforcement partners regarding five officers who have been fired and charged in Memphis Tennessee. We understand that a video will be released and contains disturbing content that does not represent the values that any law enforcement officers are sworn to uphold," MPD said.

"The Metropolitan Police Department has fully activated all sworn personnel in preparation for possible First Amendment activities in the District of Columbia."

The New York City Police Department said it is monitoring the situation in Memphis.

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HEADLINE	01/26 UN: Afghan malnutrition at record high
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/food-agency-afghan-malnutrition-rates-record-high-96688023
GIST	<p>KABUL, Afghanistan -- Malnutrition rates in Afghanistan are at record highs with half the country enduring severe hunger throughout the year, a spokesman for the World Food Program said Thursday.</p> <p>The Taliban takeover in August 2021 drove millions into poverty and hunger after foreign aid stopped almost overnight. Sanctions on Taliban rulers, a halt on bank transfers and frozen billions in Afghanistan's currency reserves restricted access to global institutions and the outside money that supported the country's aid-dependent economy before the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces.</p> <p>"Half of Afghanistan endures severe hunger throughout the year, regardless of the season, and malnutrition rates are at a record high for Afghanistan," said Phillipe Kropf, a spokesman for the U.N. food agency in Kabul.</p> <p>"There are seven million children (under the age of 5) and mothers who are malnourished, in a country with a population of 40 million."</p> <p>Afghans are not starving to death, he said, but they have no resources left to stave off the humanitarian crisis.</p> <p>Aid agencies have been providing food, education and healthcare support to Afghans, including heating, cash for fuel and warm clothes. But distribution has been severely impacted by a Taliban edict banning women from working at national and international nongovernmental groups.</p>

“The ban has come at the worst possible moment,” said Kropf. “Families and communities don’t know where their next meal is coming from.”

The WFP scaled up its delivery and distribution of aid in anticipation of a tough winter before the ban came in, planning to reach 15 million this month with emergency food assistance and nutrition support. While it is not directly affected by the ban, 19 of its NGO partners suspended operations in Afghanistan following the Dec. 24 edict.

The NGO ban on women workers has seen the suspension of 115 of 437 mobile health clinics, affecting 82,000 children, and pregnant and lactating women. The suspension of a training project is hurting 39,300 people, mostly women, while the pause of a school snack program has hit 616,000 students.

At a nutrition clinic in Kabul, 32-year-old nurse Anisa Samadi said most children and mothers will die without support from agencies like the WFP and World Health Organization. Their help is needed now more than ever, she told The Associated Press on Thursday.

“In the last five months I have seen the number of patients increasing. Three months ago we had 48 patients. Last month, we had 76 and this month so far we have 69 or 70, mostly we have twins who are so weak, while their mothers are also weak.”

Shortages of medicine alongside poverty and a lack of food means even a small illness can turn into a huge problem for many Afghans, she said.

Her colleague, 30-year-old nutrition adviser Sheba Hussanzada, said children at the clinic receive therapeutic food. But the children return with pneumonia, causing unhealthy weight loss. “Mothers are saying that they don’t have wood or any other way to keep their children warm at home. They don’t have enough food to feed them,” she said.

First-time mother Fereshta, 24, visited the clinic because she doesn't have enough milk to feed her child. Her husband used to have a job, but now there is no work for him.

“Since the Taliban have come, the economic condition is so bad and people don’t have food to eat. People don't have three meals. If there weren't such a center to support us, I might lose my child,” the young mother said.

The NGO ban has followed in a slew of measures restricting the rights and freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan, and has drawn international condemnation and weeks of campaigning to get it lifted.

The highest-ranking woman at the U.N. Amina Mohammed said Wednesday she used everything in her “toolbox” during meetings with Taliban ministers in Afghanistan to try to reverse their crackdown on women and girls, urging Muslim countries to help the Taliban move from the “13th century to the 21st” century.

On Thursday, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric, asked for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’ reaction to rising malnutrition rates in Afghanistan said: “It’s yet another sign of the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan we’re seeing in the midst of particularly harsh winter conditions.”

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HEADLINE	01/26 Fighting intensifies in eastern Congo
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/fighting-intensifies-eastern-congo-displacing-hundreds-96700691
GIST	GOMA, Congo -- Fighting intensified around a town in eastern Congo Thursday as a rebel group seeking to expand the territory it controls increased pressure on government troops defending it, forcing hundreds of civilians to flee their homes.

By evening it was unclear who controlled Kitchanga in North Kivu province. Videos on social media appeared to show fighters in the M23 group celebrating and claiming they'd captured the town. It was impossible to independently verify their authenticity.

Congo for months has accused neighboring Rwanda of supporting the M23 group — whose origins lie in the region's ethnic fighting — and powerful voices in the West have openly agreed. Rwanda denies backing the group, which is one of dozens operating in mineral-rich eastern Congo.

At a Nov. 23 summit in Angola, which included Congo's president and Rwanda's foreign minister, regional leaders called for a cease-fire in eastern Congo to be followed by a withdrawal of rebels from major towns under M23 control.

The group said it would leave some of the occupied territories before Jan. 15, but some areas remain under its control and it's seeking to capture others from government forces. M23 has been accused by the United Nations and rights groups of atrocities against civilians.

Kitchanga is a key town as it sits on the last open route between North Kivu's main economic hubs of Goma and Butembo. The others were cut off due to the fighting.

Many of Kitchanga's inhabitants fled Thursday's violence.

"We have just been through the war in Kitchanga, we saw M23 killing people, we were afraid, that's why we fled so we wouldn't die too," said Angelique Mukeshimana. The mother of four went to a makeshift displacement site on the outskirts of Goma, some 150 kilometers (93 miles) away leaving all her belongings behind.

The fighting comes days before Pope Francis is due in Congo's capital Kinshasa for a three-day visit. The trip was originally supposed to include a stop in the east, however the Vatican scrapped that amid the rising violence.

M23's political spokesman, Lawrence Kanyuka, in a statement Thursday accused government troops of attacking civilians in Kitchanga and elsewhere, and said the rebel group was "obliged to intervene and stop another genocide."

A spokesperson for a United Nations peacekeeping mission in Congo said more than 500 civilians have taken refuge in and around the U.N. peacekeeping base in Kitchanga, where they've been given tents, food, water and first aid.

"The M23 must cease all hostilities and withdraw from the occupied areas," Ndeye Khady Lo said.

Analysts say the rebel group's drive to expand has devastating consequences for civilians.

"If reports that the group has taken control of Kitchanga ... are true, this is yet another indication of the group's ongoing territorial ambitions and apparent unwillingness to withdraw," said Daniel Levine-Spound, a researcher at the Center for Civilians in Conflict.

"The group's continued westward expansion also raises meaningful fears that M23 could seek to fully encircle Goma. Sustained international pressure, including on M23's backers, will be critical in halting the group's advance," he said.

Largely comprised of Congolese ethnic Tutsis, M23 rose to prominence 10 years ago when it seized Goma on the border with Rwanda. It's part of long line of rebel groups linked with Rwanda since the 1990s when the country sought out ethnic Hutu militias, who had fled to Congo after killing Rwandan Tutsis during the genocide.

HEADLINE	01/26 France recalls envoy to Burkina Faso
SOURCE	https://www.africanews.com/2023/01/26/france-recalls-envoy-to-burkina-faso-after-expulsion-of-its-forces/
GIST	<p>France said on Thursday that it was recalling its ambassador from Burkina Faso, a day after agreeing to demands from the ruling junta to pull out troops from the former French colony in Africa's Sahel region.</p> <p>"In the context of the latest developments in Burkina Faso, we have decided to recall our ambassador to Paris for consultations on the state and perspectives of our bilateral relations," the foreign ministry said.</p> <p>Burkina on Monday said it had asked France to withdraw within a month its contingent of some 400 troops currently stationed in the country and on Wednesday Paris agreed to do so.</p> <p>It marked the latest scaling down of France's military presence in Africa after the junta in neighbouring Mali also insisted French troops leave and President Emmanuel Macron drew the curtain on the over decade-long anti-jihadist mission.</p> <p>Both Mali and Burkina Faso fell out with Paris after a military coup brought a junta to power and the French presence became increasingly unpopular among the public.</p> <p>Jihadist activity continues in the region while concern grows over the increasing influence of Russia, in particular through the presence of mercenaries from the Wagner Group run by an ally of President Vladimir Putin.</p> <p>Burkina is one of the poorest and most volatile in Africa.</p> <p>Thousands of troops, police and civilians have been killed and around two million people have fled their homes since jihadists launched an insurgency from neighbouring Mali in 2015.</p> <p>More than a third of the country lies beyond the control of the government, and frustration within the army at the mounting toll triggered two coups last year.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Ga. governor declares state of emergency
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/kemp-declares-state-emergency-after-protests-mobilizes-national/story?id=96701465
GIST	<p>Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp declared a state of emergency Thursday in response to ongoing protests in downtown Atlanta.</p> <p>Kemp ordered the state's defense department to mobilize up to 1,000 state National Guard troops to be called up to active duty "as necessary."</p> <p>Authorities arrested six people Saturday when demonstrations over a proposed training ground for the Atlanta Police Department, which started peacefully, involved shooting fireworks, smashing windows, and igniting a police cruiser once protestors reached downtown.</p> <p>Police suppressed the protests quickly, authorities said last weekend.</p> <p>The group behind the protests, called 'Stop Cop City,' has demonstrated against the training facility for months and was particularly moved last week by the death of a protestor when police raided a campground occupied by demonstrators.</p> <p>Police say the protestor, Manuel Esteban Paez Teran, fired first, injuring an officer, but activists have questioned authorities' description of the encounter.</p>

	<p>The proposed training center, which was approved by the Atlanta City Council in 2021, will "reimagine law enforcement training," according to the website of the Atlanta Police Foundation, which is spearheading the project.</p> <p>In a September FAQ posted on its website, the Foundation acknowledged that the 85 acres on which the facility is being built, which is part of a wooded area in DeKalb County, had been designated by the city council in 2017 as a future green space. However, the group claims that the plan "was not well-known" and said it was not binding.</p> <p>Kemp's state of emergency declaration came as Atlanta braces for possible protests on Friday when Memphis authorities intend to release body camera footage of the alleged beating of Tyre Nichols by five Memphis police officers who have since been fired and charged with murder in his death.</p> <p>"We are closely monitoring the events in Memphis and are prepared to support peaceful protests in our city," the Atlanta Police Department said in a statement Thursday. "We understand and share in the outrage surrounding the death of Tyre Nichols. Police officers are expected to conduct themselves in a compassionate, competent, and constitutional manner and these officers failed Tyre, their communities and their profession. We ask that demonstrations be safe and peaceful."</p> <p>Kemp did not indicate whether his declaration was also in preparation for any Nichols-related protests.</p>
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Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	01/26 SparkRAT attacks east Asia companies
SOURCE	https://therecord.media/large-east-asian-companies-attacked-with-sparkrat-open-source-tool/
GIST	<p>Large companies in East Asia are being attacked with an open source tool named SparkRAT, according to a new report.</p> <p>Researchers from SentinelLabs told The Record that they have been tracking a hacking group named "DragonSpark" since October due to its frequent attacks on large companies, which they did not name, and its ability to continually evolve.</p> <p>"Many victim organizations have a large customer base, leading to the belief that the threat actors may be targeting customer data for criminal or other purposes. Currently, the DragonSpark attack cluster is considered to be opportunistic in nature," the researchers told The Record.</p> <p>The researchers said their study reiterates that threat actors continue to innovate with open source tools that allow them to better evade detection and obfuscate their goals.</p> <p>Hackers have adopted SparkRAT due to its practicality, they said. The remote access Trojan (RAT) is a readily-available, feature-rich and multi-platform tool.</p> <p>Research found that a Chinese-speaking actor is likely behind the DragonSpark attacks, and the hackers are using compromised infrastructure located in China and Taiwan to stage SparkRAT along with other tools and malware.</p> <p>Microsoft released its own report on SparkRAT in December, warning of several actors using the tool.</p> <p>DragonSpark typically targets web and database servers exposed to the internet and uses a variety of tools in their attacks to gain access to environments and move laterally.</p>

	<p>They rely heavily on open source tools provided by Chinese-speaking developers or vendors, including the privilege escalation tools SharpToken and BadPotato, alongside SparkRAT. SharpToken allows hackers to add, delete, or change the passwords of system users, according to SentinelOne.</p> <p>SparkRAT stands out among the tools used by the group because of the wide range of actions it enables. SentinelLabs researchers found that it allows hackers to shut down a system, restart it or put it in hibernation. Users can delete or download files and exfiltrate platform information.</p> <p>“The DragonSpark attacks leveraged infrastructure located in Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, and Singapore to stage SparkRAT and other tools and malware. The C2 servers were located in Hong Kong and the United States,” the researchers said.</p> <p>“The malware staging infrastructure includes compromised infrastructure of legitimate Taiwanese organizations and businesses, such as a baby product retailer, an art gallery, and games and gambling websites.”</p> <p>The researchers were unable to identify the group’s motivations but said it may range from cybercrime to espionage. Some of its tools are used by Chinese cybercriminals while others are used as part of espionage campaigns.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/27 Reminder: \$10M reward cybercrooks info
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/us-reiterates-10-million-reward-offer-after-disruption-of-hive-ransomware/
GIST	<p>Following the shutdown of the Hive ransomware operation by law enforcement, the US government has reminded the public that a reward of up to \$10 million is offered for information on cybercriminals.</p> <p>Authorities in the United States and Europe announced on Thursday the results of a major law enforcement operation targeting the Hive ransomware. More than a dozen agencies collaborated to take down the Tor-based leak website used by the group and other parts of its infrastructure, including servers located in Los Angeles.</p> <p>The FBI revealed that Hive's 'control panel' was hacked by agents in July 2022, allowing them to identify targets and obtain decryption keys that allowed victims to recover encrypted files. The FBI and Europol said they prevented the payment of more than \$130 million to the cybercriminals.</p> <p>The Hive ransomware operation was launched in June 2021 and it has since made more than 1,500 victims across roughly 80 countries. It’s believed that administrators and affiliates made approximately \$100 million from ransom payments.</p> <p>Authorities continue to investigate Hive in an effort to identify the threat actors involved in the operation, including developers, administrators and affiliates.</p> <p>After the operation against Hive was announced on Thursday, the US State Department reiterated that it’s prepared to pay up to \$10 million for information on the identity or location of foreign state-sponsored threat actors that have targeted critical infrastructure. This includes individuals linked to Hive.</p> <p>At least some of the people involved in the Hive ransomware operation are believed to be Russian speakers. However, during a press conference announcing the law enforcement operation against Hive on Thursday, US officials refused to comment on potential ties to Russia, citing the ongoing investigation.</p> <p>The US government previously reiterated its \$10 million reward offer for leaders of the Conti ransomware operation, North Korean hackers, Russian intelligence officers, and DarkSide ransomware operators.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Cobalt Sapling targets Saudi Arabia
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SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/iran-cobalt-sapling-targets-saudi/
GIST	<p>The threat actor known as Cobalt Sapling has been spotted creating a new persona dubbed "Abraham's Ax" to target Saudi Arabia for political leverage.</p> <p>The findings come from cybersecurity experts at Secureworks' Counter Threat Unit (CTU), who published an advisory about the new threat earlier today.</p> <p>In a report shared with Infosecurity via email, Secureworks wrote that the emergence of Abraham's Ax and its attacks on Saudi government ministries highlight its political objectives.</p> <p>"There are clear political motivations behind this group with information operations designed to destabilize delicate Israeli-Saudi Arabian relations, particularly as Saudi Arabia continues talks with Israel on normalizing relations," commented Secureworks CTU principal researcher Rafe Pilling.</p> <p>Further, the security researcher noticed that Abraham's Ax mirrors the iconography, videography and leak sites of a separate threat actor known as Moses Staff. Both groups use similar logos and a WordPress blog as the medium for their leak sites.</p> <p>The two threat actors also seem to be relying on the same custom malware, a cryptographic wiper that encrypts data without offering to release keys in exchange for payment.</p> <p>At the same time, Secureworks noticed that the Abraham's Ax persona does not seem to directly replace Moses Staff, as the latter group's leak site and Telegram channels had remained active following the former's emergence.</p> <p>"Iran has a history of using proxy groups and manufactured personas to target regional and international adversaries," Pilling added.</p> <p>"Over the last couple of years, an increasing number of criminal and hacktivist group personas have emerged to target perceived enemies of Iran while providing plausible deniability to the Government of Iran regarding association or responsibility for these attacks. This trend is likely to continue."</p> <p>To mitigate exposure to this malware, the Secureworks team recommended that organizations use available controls to review and restrict access using the indicators listed in the advisory.</p> <p>Its publication comes hours after the UK National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) warned against spearphishing attacks by Russian and Iranian threat actors, including Cobalt Sapling's Abraham's Ax.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Blank image attack hides malicious scripts
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/blank-image-attack-evade-anti-malware/
GIST	<p>According to Check Point Software company Avanan researchers, a new attack tactic is designed to lure innocent users into giving away their assets. It has been dubbed a Blank Image attack, and the targets are spread across the globe.</p> <p>In this new phishing scam, hackers send blank images in HTML attachments. When the recipient opens the attachment, they are redirected to a malicious landing page that delivers malware.</p> <p>Researchers reported that attackers have now learned how to bypass antivirus services such as VirusTotal and implant malware in Blank images. Avanan's cybersecurity researcher, Jeremy Fuchs, noted that scammers could easily target anyone using this tactic as the objective is to obtain something from the user.</p> <p>"Any user with access to credentials or money is a viable target," Fuchs noted.</p>

How Does the Attack Work?

As [per the findings](#), this phishing attack targets the victim via email. The email includes a document purportedly sent from [DocuSign](#), which contains a link that takes the victim to the electronic agreement management service's official website if they click the button "View Completed Document."

This is interesting as the link redirects the victim to the legit landing page of DocuSign, so they are tricked into trusting the email. The danger, however, lies in the HTML or .htm attachment that's a part of the DocuSign link, as this attachment contains an SVG image.

This image is encoded using Base64- a binary-to-text encoding program. This is an empty image, but the file has an active JavaScript that redirects the victim to the malicious link. Since this is a blank image, nothing appears on the screen. It is only used to serve the malicious script to bypass antivirus services.

If you want to stay safe, avoid opening any attachments with the extension .htm, and it is recommended that administrators block HTML attachments.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Google cuts accounts: China disinformation
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/google-nukes-50-000-accounts-pushing-chinese-disinformation/
GIST	<p>Google's Threat Analysis Group terminated tens of thousands of accounts linked to a group known as "Dragonbridge" or "Spamouflage Dragon" that is disseminating pro-Chinese disinformation across multiple online platforms.</p> <p>According to Google, Dragonbridge gets new Google Accounts from bulk account sellers, and, in some instances, they've even switched to accounts previously used by financially motivated actors repurposed for posting disinformation videos and blogs.</p> <p>Last year, the company took down more than 50,000 accounts used by Dragonbridge across its platforms, including YouTube, Blogger, and AdSense. In total, 100,960 accounts have been shut down since the influence network was first spotted.</p> <p>This reflects Google's focus on this coordinated information operation linked to China, described as "the most prolific IO actor TAG tracks."</p> <p>Almost no engagement from real viewers</p> <p>However, despite the Chinese influence operation's large size and high volume of content production, it has minimal to no engagement from real viewers.</p> <p>For instance, the vast majority of its YouTube channels had no subscribers when they were taken down last year, and more than 80% of videos had fewer than 100 views.</p> <p>Dragonbridge blogs on Blogger also had a very low engagement, with less than 10 views per post for almost 95% of posts when they were terminated in December.</p> <p>"Most DRAGONBRIDGE activity is low quality content without a political message, populated across many channels and blogs. However, a small fraction of DRAGONBRIDGE accounts also post about current events with messaging that pushes pro-China views," Google TAG's Zak Butler and Jonas Taege said.</p> <p>"In 2022, the overwhelming majority of DRAGONBRIDGE content Google disrupted never reached a real audience. Among the 53,177 channels we disabled in 2022, 58% had zero subscribers and 42% of their videos had zero views. 83% of those videos had fewer than 100 views."</p> <p>Signs of evolving tactics</p>

	<p>Despite its lack of engagement from authentic viewers, the pro-Chinese disinformation operation is exhibiting persistence and adaptability.</p> <p>The group, which has been monitored by Google TAG analysts since 2019, has consistently switched tactics and experimented with new formats and higher-quality content.</p> <p>This shows that there is still a risk that the group's activity will eventually land on the radars of real users, which would likely boost the overall impact of its content criticizing the U.S. and pushing pro-China messages.</p> <p>"Despite their failure to gain traction with an authentic audience, DRAGONBRIDGE generates high volumes of content across multiple platforms, is persistent and continues to experiment in their tactics and techniques," Google added.</p> <p>"That is why we have scaled our efforts to disrupt DRAGONBRIDGE coordinated inauthentic activity on our platforms."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 New Mimic abuses 'Everything' search tool
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-mimic-ransomware-abuses-everything-windows-search-tool/
GIST	<p>Security researchers discovered a new ransomware strain they named Mimic that leverages the APIs of the 'Everything' file search tool for Windows to look for files targeted for encryption.</p> <p>Discovered in June 2022 by researchers at cybersecurity company Trend Micro, the malware appears to target mainly English and Russian-speaking users.</p> <p>Some of the code in Mimic shares similarities with Conti ransomware, the source of which was leaked in March 2022 by a Ukrainian researcher.</p> <p>Mimic attacks</p> <p>Mimic ransomware attacks begin with the victim receiving an executable, presumably via email, which extracts four files on the target system, including the main payload, ancillary files, and tools to disable Windows Defender.</p> <p>Mimic is a versatile ransomware strain that supports command line arguments to narrow file targeting, while it can also make use of multiple processor threads to speed up the data encryption process.</p> <p>The new ransomware family features several capabilities seen in modern strains, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting system information • Creating persistence via the RUN key • Bypassing User Account Control (UAC) • Disabling Windows Defender • Disabling Windows telemetry • Activating anti-shutdown measures • Activating anti-kill measures • Unmounting Virtual Drives • Terminating processes and services • Disabling sleep mode and shutdown of the system • Removing indicators • Inhibiting System Recovery <p>Killing processes and services aim to disable protection measures and free up important data like database files, making them available for encryption.</p>

Abusing Everything

"Everything" is the name of a popular filename search engine for Windows developed by [Voidtools](#). The utility is light and quick, uses minimal system resources, and has support for real-time updates.

Mimic ransomware uses Everything's search capabilities in the form of the 'Everything32.dll' dropped during the infection stage to query for specific file names and extensions on the compromised system.

Everything helps Mimic locate files that are valid for encryption while avoiding system files that would render the system unbootable if locked.

Files encrypted by Mimic get the ".QUIETPLACE" extension. A ransom note is also dropped, informing of the attacker's demands and how the data can be recovered after by paying a ransom in Bitcoin.

Mimic is a new strain with unproven activity as of yet, but using of the Conti builder and the Everything API proves its authors are competent software developers who have a clear understanding of how they can achieve their goals.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Phishing targets password vaults
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/bitwarden-password-vaults-targeted-in-google-ads-phishing-attack/
GIST	<p>Bitwarden and other password managers are being targeted in Google ads phishing campaigns to steal users' password vault credentials.</p> <p>As the enterprise and consumers move to use unique passwords at every site, it has become essential to use password managers to keep track of all the passwords.</p> <p>However, unless you use a local password manager, like KeePass, most password managers are cloud-based, allowing users to access their passwords through websites and mobile apps.</p> <p>These passwords are stored in the cloud in "password vaults" that keep the data in an encrypted format, usually encrypted using users' master passwords.</p> <p>Recent security breaches at LastPass and credential stuffing attacks at Norton have illustrated that a master password is a weak point for a password vault.</p> <p>For this reason, threat actors have been spotted creating phishing pages that target your password vault's login credentials, potentially authentication cookies, as once they gain access to these, they have full access to your vault.</p> <p>Bitwarden users targeted by Google ads phishing</p> <p>On Tuesday, Bitwarden users began seeing a Google ad titled 'Bitward - Password Manager' in search results for "bitwarden password manager."</p> <p>While BleepingComputer could not replicate this ad, it was seen by Bitwarden users on Reddit [1, 2] and the Bitwarden forums.</p> <p>The domain used in the ad was 'appbitwarden.com' and, when clicked, redirected users to the site 'bitwardenlogin.com.'</p> <p>In our tests, the phishing page will accept credentials and, once submitted, redirect users to the legitimate Bitwarden login page.</p> <p>However, our initial tests used fake credentials, and the page was shut down by the time we began testing with actual Bitwarden test login credentials.</p>

	<p>Therefore, we were unable to see if the phishing page would also attempt to steal MFA-backed session cookies (authentication tokens) like many advanced phishing pages.</p> <p>While many people feel that the URL was a dead giveaway that it was a phishing page, others couldn't tell if it was fake or not.</p> <p>"God damn. In situations like this how can I detect the fake one? This is truly scary," said the poster of a Reddit topic about the phishing page.</p> <p>"People are saying to look at the URL, maybe it's just my tiny brain but I can't tell which is the real one," commented another user on the same Reddit post.</p> <p>To make matters worse, it's not only Bitwarden being targeted by malicious phishing pages in Google ads. Security researcher MalwareHunterTeam also recently found Google ads targeting the credentials for the 1Password password manager.</p> <p>BleepingComputer has not been able to find other ads targeting other password managers, but Google search result advertisements have become a massive cybersecurity problem lately.</p> <p>Recent research has shown that threat actors are using Google ads to fuel their malware delivery campaigns for initial access to corporate networks, to steal credentials, and for phishing attacks.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Killnet hits German govt., airports, banks
SOURCE	https://www.darkreading.com/ics-ot/german-government-airports-banks-hit-killnet-ddos-attacks
GIST	<p>After Berlin agreed to send its advanced Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine, Russia-backed threat group Killnet retaliated with DDoS attacks aimed at Germany's government, banking, and airport sites.</p> <p>Germany's BSI federal agency, which oversees information security, said the attacks caused some small outages, but otherwise did little damage.</p> <p>"Currently, some websites are not accessible," the BSI said in a statement to Reuters. "There are currently no indications of direct effects on the respective service and, according to the BSI's assessment, these are not to be expected if the usual protective measures are taken."</p> <p>Last fall Killnet was behind similar DDoS attacks against US airports last fall and has been escalating its nefarious cyber activities throughout Russia's invasion of Ukraine.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Yandex denies hack, blames insider theft
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/yandex-denies-hack-blames-source-code-leak-on-former-employee/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>A Yandex source code repository allegedly stolen by a former employee of the Russian technology company has been leaked as a Torrent on a popular hacking forum.</p> <p>Yesterday, the leaker posted a magnet link that they claim are 'Yandex git sources' consisting of 44.7 GB of files stolen from the company in July 2022. These code repositories allegedly contain all of the company's source code besides anti-spam rules.</p> <p>Software engineer Arseniy Shestakov analyzed the leaked Yandex Git repository and said it contains technical data and code about the following products:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yandex search engine and indexing bot

- Yandex Maps
- Alice (AI assistant)
- Yandex Taxi
- Yandex Direct (ads service)
- Yandex Mail
- Yandex Disk (cloud storage service)
- Yandex Market
- Yandex Travel (travel booking platform)
- Yandex360 (workspaces service)
- Yandex Cloud
- Yandex Pay (payment processing service)
- Yandex Metrika (internet analytics)

Shestakov also shared a [directory listing of the leaked files](#) on GitHub for those who want to see what source code was stolen.

"There are at least some API keys, but they are likely only been used for testing deployment only," said Shestakov about the leaked data.

In a statement to BleepingComputer, Yandex said their systems were not hacked, and a former employee leaked the source code repository.

"Yandex was not hacked. Our security service found code fragments from an internal repository in the public domain, but the content differs from the current version of the repository used in Yandex services. A repository is a tool for storing and working with code. Code is used in this way internally by most companies.

Repositories are needed to work with code and are not intended for the storage of personal user data. We are conducting an internal investigation into the reasons for the release of source code fragments to the public, but we do not see any threat to user data or platform performance." - Yandex.

Exposure to hackers

BleepingComputer also discussed the leak with [Grigory Bakunov](#), a former senior systems administrator, deputy chief of development, and director of spreading technologies at Yandex. who is very familiar with the leaked code, having worked at the tech giant between 2002 and 2019.

Bakunov explained that the motive of the data leak was political, and the rogue Yandex employee responsible for the data leak had not tried to sell the code to competitors.

The former senior executive added that the leak does not contain any customer data, so it does not constitute a direct risk to the privacy or security of Yandex users, nor does it directly threaten to leak proprietary technology.

Yandex uses a monorepo structure called 'Arcadia,' but not all of the company's services use it. Also, even just to build a service, you need a lot of internal tools and special knowledge, as standard building procedures do not apply.

The leaked repository contains only code; the other important part is data. Key parts, like model weights for neural networks, etc., are absent, so it's almost useless.

Still, there are a lot of interesting files with names like "blacklist.txt" that could potentially expose working services.

However, Bakunov told BleepingComputer that the leaked code creates the potential for hackers to identify security gaps and create targeted exploits. Bakunov believes this is only a matter of time now.

	<p>The former executive also commented on Yandex's response, saying that the leaked code may not be identical to the current code used in the firm's working services but might be up to 90% similar.</p> <p>Therefore, thoroughly examining the leaked code could yield possible weak points at Yandex for threat actors.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Chinese PlugX malware in USB devices
SOURCE	https://unit42.paloaltonetworks.com/plugx-variants-in-usbs/?web_view=true
GIST	<p>Executive Summary</p> <p>Recently, our Unit 42 incident response team was engaged in a Black Basta breach response that uncovered several tools and malware samples on the victim's machines, including GootLoader malware, Brute Ratel C4 red-teaming tool and an older PlugX malware sample. The PlugX malware stood out to us as this variant infects any attached removable USB media devices such as floppy, thumb or flash drives and any additional systems the USB is later plugged into.</p> <p>This PlugX malware also hides actor files in a USB device using a novel technique that works even on the most recent Windows operating systems (OS) at the time of writing this post. This means the malicious files can only be viewed on a Unix-like (*nix) OS or by mounting the USB device in a forensic tool.</p> <p>We also discovered a similar variant of PlugX in VirusTotal that infects USB devices and copies all Adobe PDF and Microsoft Word files from the host. It places these copies in a hidden folder on the USB device that is created by the malware.</p> <p>PlugX is a second-stage implant used not only by multiple groups with a Chinese nexus but also by several cybercrime groups. It has been around for over a decade and has been observed in some high-profile cyberattacks, including the U.S. Government Office of Personnel Management (OPM) breach in 2015. It is a modular malware framework, supporting an evolving set of capabilities throughout the years.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>PlugX malware has been used for over a decade and was historically extensively associated with Chinese nation-state APT groups. Over the years, it has been adopted and used by other threat groups, from nation-states to ransomware actors.</p> <p>The typical tradecraft of PlugX uses benign files to achieve code execution, also known as DLL side loading, that many security vendors now detect and prevent. This might be part of why the actors added the capability to infect any attached removable media USB devices such as floppy, thumb or flash drives as well as any additional systems the USB is later plugged into.</p> <p>Any host infected with this variant of the PlugX malware will continuously monitor for new USB removable devices to infect. This PlugX malware also hides attacker files in a USB device with a novel technique, which makes the malicious files only viewable on a *nix OS or by mounting the USB device in a forensic tool. Because of this ability to evade detection, the PlugX malware can continue to spread and potentially jump to air-gapped networks.</p> <p>Additionally, we discovered a similar variant of PlugX in VirusTotal with the added capability of copying all Adobe PDF and Microsoft Word documents from the infected host to the USB device's hidden folder created by the PlugX malware. The discovery of these samples indicates PlugX development is still alive and well among at least some technically skilled attackers, and it remains an active threat.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Phishing targets Ukraine critical sectors
SOURCE	https://www.bankinfosecurity.com/ukraines-critical-sectors-targeted-in-phishing-attack-surge-a-21024?&web_view=true

Attempts to disrupt Ukrainian cyberspace appear to have spiked in late 2022, say independent observers of the country's networks as Russia continues to press its invasion.

Phishing attacks and malware campaigns targeting Ukraine increased sharply in November before falling at year's end, says security firm Trellix. So too did endpoint security alerts in the region tied to "potentially unwanted programs."

The surge in attacks parallels findings from other cyberattack watchers. Geneva-based nonprofit group CyberPeace Institute says there have been 918 cyberattacks and operations tied to the conflict since January 2022 (see: Ukraine: Russian Hackers' Focus Is Civilian Infrastructure).

The institute in November recorded a sudden increase in online attacks connected Russia's war when compared to the prior month's volume. The only exception was the Russian Federation, which saw the volume of attacks against it decrease.

Throughout the war, experts say, Ukraine's government, energy, transportation, financial services and other critical-infrastructure sectors remain among the top targets of online attacks. "From malicious email and URLs to nation-state-backed use of malware, cyberactivity continues to accompany kinetic military activity and social discontent," the Trellix researchers say.

What might account for either the increase or decrease in the last months of 2022 isn't clear, especially at a time when the head of U.S. intelligence said the cadence of attacks had slowed.

"We're seeing a kind of a reduced tempo already of the conflict," Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines told attendees of the Reagan National Defense Forum on Dec. 3, "and we expect that's likely to be what we see in the coming months."

Trellix reports that last November and December, the observed volume of phishing attacks hitting Ukraine surged twentyfold, and the majority of attacks targeted email addresses registered in the top-level .ua domain, which is used by government and military agencies. While the sender was often spoofed, "the large majority" of these attacks appear to trace to Russia's state-sponsored Gamaredon group, so named because the group's early attacks included messages misspelled the word "armageddon."

The rise in potentially unwanted programs is connected to attempts to infect systems with malware designed to look like software for pirating Adobe products. Trellix says all of these attacks trace "to a single software activation program aimed at activating Adobe" and says that while the use of "pirated license activators" remains widespread, a vast number of them are fakes, designed solely to infect a system with malware.

Tactically speaking, the phishing attempts also didn't look advanced. Many of them relied on widely seen tactics such as using macro-enabled Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, Microsoft Word documents and LNK Windows shortcut files.

Phishing email examples recovered by Trellix include ones that purport to come from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia, sharing contact details, but that redirect to a malicious file hosted on Google Drive; an HTML "shipment notification" that redirects to a phishing page; and a request from the Ukrainian military to verify a mailbox that contains a link to a malicious website.

Andromeda Attacks

Beyond the Gamaredon group phishing campaigns, Trellix reports that in recent months it has also seen a number of attacks using the H-Worm - aka Houdini RAT - remote access Trojan, including in "targeted attacks against the international energy industry"; Formbook information-stealing malware; Remcos remote-control software; and Andromeda malware.

The Andromeda attacks have been unusual. First seen in 2011, Andromeda is commercially available, off-the-shelf malware that continues to be updated. But Google's incident response group Mandiant reported

Jan. 5 that it has seen a 2013-era version of Andromeda being used by what it suspects is Russian nation-state hacking group Turla, also tracked as Venomous Bear and Krypton.

In September, Mandiant discovered a suspected Turla Team operation distributing the KopiLuwak reconnaissance utility and QuietCanary backdoor to Andromeda malware victims in Ukraine, it reported. Malware operators re-registered at least three expired Andromeda command-and-control domains and began profiling victims to selectively deploy KopiLuwak and QuietCanary.

Mandiant says the infection appeared to begin in December 2021, when the victim plugged an infected USB device into a Windows system and then clicked on a malicious file link disguised as a folder.

It's not clear why attackers in 2022 wanted to wield 2013-era malware tied to domains that they were forced to re-register first. Then again, "older malware and infrastructure may be more likely to be overlooked by defenders triaging a wide variety of alerts," the Mandiant researchers say.

This belatedly observed attack did succeed, resulting in attackers exfiltrating data.

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HEADLINE	01/26 FBI seizes Hive ransomware leak site
SOURCE	https://cybernews.com/news/fbi-closed-hive-ransomware/
GIST	<p><i>The prolific ransomware syndicate Hive has met its end. Hive's leak site, a website to post Hive's victims, as well as the Application Programming Interface (API) of its server were seized by US authorities.</i></p> <p>Users trying to visit the Hive ransomware gangs' website were met with a notice of seizure on Thursday. The display of such information usually indicates that the authorities have taken down the ransomware syndicate or at least penetrated its systems.</p> <p>"The Federal Bureau of Investigation seized this site as part of a coordinated law enforcement action taken against Hive Ransomware," reads the note on Hive's leak site, that's shown in English and Russian languages.</p> <p>According to the Cybernews researcher team, the Hive server's Application Programming Interface (API) has also been seized by the authorities. That's indicative of a complete takedown of the gang's infrastructure. A "last modified" time stamp on Hive's server indicates the takedown took place around 12 PM GMT on 26 January.</p> <p>We have contacted the Department of Justice (DoJ) and Europol for confirmation about the operation against Hive but haven't immediately received a response.</p> <p>If confirmed, the seizure would mark the end of another major ransomware group. Other major criminal syndicates such as Conti, DarkSide and REvil were hit by authorities or disbanded themselves in recent years.</p> <p>However, taking over gang's IT infrastructure rarely impacts people behind it. Ransomware gangs rebrand and continue operation under different names. For example, Conti members formed BlackBasta, while DarkSide first became BlackMatter, renaming to BlackCat/ALPHV later on.</p> <p>Prolific cybercriminals</p> <p>Hive ransomware was first observed in June 2021 and has victimized hundreds of businesses since the start of its operations. Similarly to other ransomware gangs, Hive employed a ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) model through its affiliate program.</p> <p>Hive rocked the ransomware market from the very beginning, hacking Europe's largest consumer electronics retailer MediaMarkt and demanding a whopping \$240m ransom payment.</p>

	<p>Security researchers considered the group to be among the most active in 2022. According to researchers at Intel471, the group recorded around 9% of reported ransomware attacks in the third quarter of 2022.</p> <p>While some ransomware syndicates at least pretend to avoid attacking healthcare institutions, Hive thrived on targeting hospitals. For example, the group hit a Louisiana hospital late last year, impacting 270,000 patients.</p> <p>Last November, the Russia-linked ransomware group topped the US authorities' list of threats, having extorted some \$100 million from more than 1,300 companies worldwide since it first surfaced.</p> <p>CISA added that since June last year, it has observed threat actors using Hive ransomware "to target a wide range of businesses and critical infrastructure sectors" – especially healthcare facilities.</p>
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Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	01/26 Spain identifies machete attack suspect
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spain-church-machete-attack-suspect-was-25-year-old-moroccan-police-confirm-2023-01-26/
GIST	<p>MADRID, Jan 26 (Reuters) - The suspect in a machete attack on two churches in southern Spain in which one clergyman was killed and another seriously injured is a 25-year-old Moroccan man who was due to be deported from the country, police said on Thursday.</p> <p>The suspect was arrested on Wednesday evening after a man wielding a machete attacked several people at the churches of San Isidro and Nuestra Senora de La Palma, around 300 metres (1,000 feet) apart, in the southern port city of Algeciras.</p> <p>Police said they took the suspect to his home overnight for detectives to conduct a search, a spokesman for Spain's National Police said.</p> <p>He is expected to be transferred to the Spanish capital Madrid later on Thursday to appear before a High Court judge on terrorism charges at a time to be confirmed, police and court spokespeople said.</p> <p>A police source denied local media reports that the suspect had been under surveillance by security operatives in the days or months before the attack.</p> <p>He had no criminal nor terrorism-related convictions either in Spain or other allied countries, the source said, declining to be identified due to the sensitivity of the case.</p> <p>The man was not in Spain legally and his deportation process began in June last year and was ongoing, the source added.</p> <p>Diego Valencia, a sacristan at the Nuestra Senora de La Palma church, was killed after the assailant chased him out of the church and attacked him in the busy square outside, police and church groups said.</p> <p>A second man, the priest of the parish church of San Isidro, Antonio Rodriguez, was operated on last night for serious knife wounds and is said to be in a stable condition, the city's mayor told local television.</p> <p>Local media said three others were injured, though police did not confirm.</p> <p>Mayor José Antonio Landaluze said the attacker's knife narrowly missed the priest's spinal cord. "He lost a lot of blood, the stretcher was soaked with blood but if everything goes well he could be discharged today at the end of the day," he told TVE.</p>

	<p>An official day of mourning has been declared by the city's mayor who will host a gathering at midday on Thursday outside the church where Valencia died.</p> <p>Spain's Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska, who will travel to the city on Thursday, said the search of the suspect's home will help police determine whether terrorism was at play.</p> <p>"There were no third persons involved in what happened," he said.</p> <p>Mayor José Antonio Landaluze has also called on the Interior Ministry for an increase in security for the city, according to an interview with COPE radio.</p> <p>The port of Algeciras in the Andalucia region serves as the main entry point for Moroccans arriving in Spain.</p> <p>Spain suffered the worst Islamist militant attack on record in Europe in 2004, when 192 people were killed and more than 1,800 injured in multiple bombings on Madrid's train system.</p> <p>According to a High Court ruling, the perpetrators were linked to Al Qaeda and the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group.</p> <p>In 2017, 16 people were killed and nearly 200 injured in a series of attacks that included Islamist militants in a van mowing down pedestrians on Barcelona's iconic Las Ramblas boulevard.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Terrorist threat on rise in Tanzania
SOURCE	https://www.persecution.org/2023/01/26/terrorist-threat-tanzania/ https://theatlantasnews.co/conflict/2023/01/26/us-issues-terrorism-alert-for-tanzania-as-opposition-leader-returns-from-exile/
GIST	<p>1/26/2023 Tanzania (International Christian Concern)—The U.S. Embassy in Tanzania issued a security alert to all Westerners and the general public on Jan. 25, following intelligence of a possible terrorist attack.</p> <p>In a statement, the Dar Es Salaam-based Embassy mapped out several tourist areas as spots the terrorists could hit.</p> <p><i>"Terrorist groups could attack with little or no warning, targeting hotels, embassies, restaurants, malls and markets, police stations, places of worship, and other places frequented by Westerners,"</i> it read.</p> <p>The U.S. Embassy urged its citizens to remain vigilant, keep a low profile, and practice personal security measures while visiting these highlighted locations.</p> <p>Reports indicate that Tanzania has been infiltrated by the Islamic State (IS) jihadists due to its proximity to the Muslim-dominated province of Cabo Delgado in Northern Mozambique. In 2020, the insurgents conducted two attacks inside Tanzania after crossing the porous border from Cabo Delgado. They attacked Kitaya and Michenjele villages in Mtwara, killing 25 people, looting, and leaving a trail of destroyed property.</p> <p>A church leader in Tanzania has asked believers to be alert and prayerful and not to take the security warning lightly.</p> <p><i>"The Lord has been good to Tanzania over the years, and we are thankful for that. We have had times of tears due to terrorism, but we are not like other East African neighbors. Lately, we have seen how our young men and women have joined terrorist groups within the region, and so we should remain vigilant and prayerful and ask God to protect us from these enemies."</i></p>

Perhaps the most notable Jihadist attack in Tanzania was on August 1998, when al-Qaeda simultaneously bombed the American embassies in Dar Es Salaam and Nairobi, claiming 11 and 213 lives, respectively.

The United States Embassy in Tanzania issued a terrorism alert on Wednesday, which came the same day as exiled Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu permanently returned to the country for the first time since 2017 following an assassination attempt.

During his political career, Lissu established himself as a key opposition figure within the Tanzania government when he won a Parliament seat in 2010. While in office, Lissu was a staunch critic of then-president John Magufuli, which saw him be arrested several times over allegations of sedition and insulting the presidency. In 2017, Lissu was shot 16 times while in his car outside of Parliament by unknown gunmen. The attack resulted in Lissu leaving the country for advanced medical treatment and out of fear for his life. After receiving medical treatment in Kenya, he moved to Belgium in self-exile, only returning back to Tanzania once in 2020 to challenge Magufuli in the Presidential election. Lissu lost and returned to Belgium after receiving death threats.

Lissu returned to Tanzania on Wednesday, arriving in the commercial capital of Dares Salaam. His return coincided with a recent decision by current President Samia Suluhu Hassan to reverse Magufuli-era bans on political rallies, which targeted opposition parties.

The United States Embassy issued a security warning for the city, advising Americans and other westerners to avoid high traffic areas in Dar es Salaam, stating that “Locations frequented by U.S. citizens and other Westerners in Dares Salaam and elsewhere in Tanzania continue to be attractive targets to terrorists planning to conduct attacks. Terrorist groups could attack with little or no warning, targeting hotels, embassies, restaurants, malls and markets, police stations, mosques, and other places frequented by Westerners.”

Tanzania has been dealing with an ISIS-aligned insurgency along its border with Mozambique for several years now, specifically by militants from Cabo Delgado. Tanzania, however, has not faced a significant attack on a major city in over two decades. It remains unknown if the adversary was meant to coincide with Lissu’s return, which has become a political focal point in the country. Rallies held by Lissu would be prime targets for attacks to disrupt political and social life in Tanzania. Likewise, the advisory could be in relation to potential attacks against Lissu by Magufuli supporters.

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HEADLINE	01/27 ‘Cop city’ activists charged w/terrorism
SOURCE	https://grist.org/protest/atlanta-cop-city-terrorism/
GIST	<p>A burst of gunfire rang through a forest on the edge of Atlanta, Georgia, on the morning of January 18. Manuel Esteban Paez Terán, whose chosen name was Tortuguita (Spanish for “little turtle”), had been shot and killed by police officers, becoming the only known person killed by law enforcement during an environmentalist act of land defense in the U.S.</p> <p>Tortuguita was part of a loose-knit group continuously occupying the woods to stop trees from being felled by construction of a sprawling police training center known to activists as Cop City. In 2021, with little public input, the Atlanta city council approved plans for the \$90 million Public Safety Training Center on the city-owned former site of Atlanta’s prison farm, which the trees had reclaimed and had previously been included in plans for a revamped parks system. (The activists call the area the Weelaunee Forest, a name from the Muscogee people who were violently forced out of the area 200 years ago.)</p> <p>Although some members of the transient and leaderless group had damaged property in apparent attempts to stymie construction, many just camped, hoping their refusal to move out of the way of the trees would</p>

prevent them from being cut down and replaced by firing ranges and a mock city where police would conduct riot training.

That morning, members of a multi-agency law enforcement task force had moved through the woods toward Tortuguita's tent. According to the Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Tortuguita fired first, using a handgun the 26-year-old had [purchased](#), and struck a Georgia State Patrol officer, who was hospitalized. No civilians appear to have witnessed what happened, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation says [no body cameras](#) captured the incident. In life, Tortuguita spoke often (and [publicly](#)) of the virtues of nonviolence, so their friends and fellow activists doubt the state's story.

"We have no reason whatsoever to trust the narrative that's been given," said Kamau Franklin, founder of the local group Community Movement Builders, which organizes with Black communities in Atlanta and opposes the police training center, citing other high-profile police killings around the country in which official narratives have fallen apart.

While the environmental nonprofit Global Witness has [documented over 1,700 killings](#) of land defenders worldwide over the past decade, Tortuguita's death is only the second such killing in the U.S. The first was a fisheries observer who [disappeared](#) at sea under circumstances that suggested foul play in 2015.

On Thursday, Governor Brian Kemp [declared a state of emergency](#) in response to protests Saturday night sparked by Tortuguita's death, during which participants threw rocks, broke windows, and burned a police car. Kemp's order, effective until February 9, allows up to 1,000 National Guard troops to police the streets of Atlanta.

To allies, Tortuguita's killing was the climax of an escalation of police and legal tactics meant to stifle the [wide-ranging](#) movement to stop construction of the training center, which includes parks advocates, prison abolitionists, and area neighborhood associations. Over the course of December and January, 19 opponents of the police training center have been charged with felonies under Georgia's rarely used 2017 domestic terrorism law. But Grist's review of [20 arrest warrants](#) shows that none of those arrested and slapped with terrorism charges are accused of seriously injuring anyone. Nine are alleged to have committed no specific illegal actions beyond misdemeanor trespassing.

Instead, their mere association with a group committed to defending the forest appears to be the foundation for declaring them terrorists. Officials have underlined that an investigation is ongoing, and charges could yet be added or removed.

Lauren Regan, an attorney who is the executive director of the Civil Liberties Defense Center, which will represent some defendants, said the charges are legally flimsy and designed to scare movement supporters.

"It's so next time a vigil happens, mom or the school teacher or the nurse — or someone that has higher risk of randomly getting arrested — is probably going to think twice about going," she said.

"They're going to use this to continually vilify and criminalize the wider movement," added Franklin.

Georgia's terror law passed in response to high-profile mass shootings including the 2015 massacre of nine Black churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, by white supremacist Dylann Roof. The 2017 law expanded the definition of "domestic terrorism" from its original designation as an act intended to kill or injure at least 10 people to one encompassing a range of property crimes. Critics at the time, including the Georgia chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, [argued](#) that the law was bound to be used against protesters and to stifle free speech. The charges validate civil liberties' groups concerns and offer a warning signal for lawmakers in both major parties who have [repeatedly](#) proposed federal domestic terrorism legislation as a solution to America's epidemic of mass murder.

Atlanta Police Department spokesperson John Chafee, on the other hand, defended the use of the law in this case. "We are hopeful the law and the possibility of being charged with this felony will be a

deterrent from engaging in criminal behavior,” he told Grist. “We support the right to protest and we will work to ensure those engaged in a lawful protest are able to do so safely.”

Elsewhere in the woods on the day of the shooting, officers tore down 25 campsites and arrested seven activists. Law enforcement also netted bystanders: One Dekalb County Police Department incident report describes two individuals walking along a river trail “in an area that is being occupied by suspects wanted for domestic terrorism.” The Georgia Bureau of Investigation recommended they be “placed in flex handcuffs and transported to the nearby command post.” Later, they were determined to be “vagrants from the city of New Orleans” and were released.

Timothy Murphy was one of the last forest defenders standing. In the predawn hours of January 19, S.W.A.T. team members shone spotlights on Murphy as the activist perched above a treehouse, according to an incident report.

Around sunrise, Murphy rappelled down the tree. Dekalb County Police S.W.A.T. members grabbed their legs, cut their harness, and booked them on charges of domestic terrorism.

So far police don’t claim that Murphy committed any act of violence or even property destruction. Key to Murphy’s terror charge, according to their arrest [warrant](#), is that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, or DHS, designated a group called Defend the Atlanta Forest as “Domestic Violent Extremists.” In other words, Murphy appears to have been charged with terrorism on the basis of their affiliation with the forest defenders.

In response to questions from Grist, a DHS spokesperson denied that the federal agency classifies any specific groups with this term, while also saying that it does use the term to refer to any U.S. individual or group “who seeks to further social or political goals, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence” and regularly shares information about threats with state and local agencies.

Regardless, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation decided that Murphy was a member of the “extremist” group on the basis of the activist’s actions: They trespassed and then refused police orders to leave the treehouse for 12 hours. As a result, if prosecutors move forward with the terror charge, Murphy will face a mandatory minimum sentence of five to 35 years in prison for what’s known as a tree sit — a common tactic among environmentalists.

The [Atlanta forest defenders’ warrants](#) state that Defend the Atlanta Forest earned its Domestic Violent Extremist label because members had thrown Molotov cocktails, rocks, and fireworks at police, and also shot metal ball bearings at contractors. They had also committed various acts of property destruction, including vandalism, discharging firearms at “critical infrastructure,” and committing arson of “public buildings, heavy equipment, private buildings, and private vehicles.”

However, besides three allegations of rock-throwing, the [14 forest defenders’ warrants](#) do not appear to accuse them of committing any of the above acts that led to the designation. Grist’s analysis of [arrest warrants](#) found that, for nine forest defenders detained during police operations in December and January, their alleged acts of “domestic terrorism” consist solely of trespassing in the woods and camping or occupying a tree house.

A [warrant](#) following a police raid on December 13, for example, justifies a domestic terrorism charge by stating that the activist “affirmed their cooperation with [Defend the Atlanta Forest] by occupying a tree house while wearing a gas mask and camouflage clothing.” Another defendant, arrested January 18, told police that they were aware of the Cop City controversy before coming to Atlanta and had planned in advance to sleep on the land — an admission that apparently became the basis for a domestic terrorism charge. “Said defendant admitted to participating in previous protests in other states for environmental causes,” the warrant added.

Four forest defenders charged with domestic terrorism are also accused of possessing incendiary devices or firearms or throwing rocks at fire department and emergency workers and damaging a police vehicle. One of those was charged separately with injuring an officer, who scraped and cut his knee and elbow as

the defendant fled. A fifth defendant is separately accused of trying to cut the rope of an arborist attempting to remove them from a tree house.

Six people charged with domestic terrorism during a night of protest in response to Tortugueta's killing on January 21, including one who was also charged in the woods, face a slightly different set of allegations. Their domestic terrorism arrest affidavits point to felony charges they face for allegedly damaging a nearby Atlanta Police Foundation building and setting fire to a police car. A separate set of arrest citations is ambiguous as to whether the defendants are known to have personally carried out property damage, though one defendant is charged with carrying spray paint, a hammer, torch fuel, and a lighter as well as kicking and spitting on an officer as they were arrested.

The initial arrest citations for domestic terrorism also state that members of the crowd "used explosives/fireworks toward police," without indicating whether the defendants did so themselves. The street protesters' domestic terrorism arrest affidavits state that the alleged felonies were carried out with the intention of intimidating officials into changing government policy.

All but one of the activists arrested in the forest were released on bonds ranging from \$6,000 to \$13,500. None of the street protesters have been released, with four dubbed flight risks and denied bond, and two unable to pay a \$355,000 bond.

The forest defenders' charges appear to stand on shaky legal ground. To be convicted under Georgia's terror law, an individual must first commit or attempt a felony. Nine of those arrested in the forest are charged with criminal trespass, which is only a misdemeanor.

Also, the acts must be intended to intimidate people, use intimidation to influence government policy, or impact the government through the use of "destructive devices, assassination, or kidnapping." How trespassing and camping could constitute intimidation is unclear. The law does not contain language about whether associating with a "Domestic Violent Extremist" group counts as terrorism.

Even if the charges are dismissed on the grounds that they do not fulfill the requirements of the law, they may leave a lasting legacy. "One of the problems with state repression is the crackdown and the arrests and the jailing and the bond — for the humans that are targeted, even if they end up being acquitted, all of that takes a toll," said Regan, the attorney.

Although [multiple](#) environmental activists have been [prosecuted](#) under federal terrorism law in recent years, it's been over a decade since the U.S. has seen anti-terrorism charges aimed at a broad swath of environmental activists.

During a period known as the "[Green Scare](#)" in the mid-2000s, more than a dozen people associated with the Earth Liberation Front and Animal Liberation Front were arrested as part of an FBI domestic terror operation. At the time, "eco-terrorism" became the Justice Department's [top domestic terrorism priority](#), despite the fact that those arrested had made a point to avoid causing any bodily harm even as they burned down facilities they considered environmentally destructive.

The smaller-scale green scare that police have carried out in Atlanta in recent weeks is in some ways even more indiscriminate, since many of the alleged terrorists are not even accused of property damage.

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HEADLINE	01/27 Australia's sovereign citizen movement
SOURCE	https://www.9news.com.au/national/what-is-a-sovereign-citizen-movement-beliefs-explainer/968ac369-a7bd-4a6d-9465-7bc2a1d13bdf
GIST	Sovereign citizen: It's a term you've probably come across if you've seen a video of someone getting pulled over for a traffic stop and refusing to provide their details to police, claiming law enforcement has no authority over them — only to be arrested shortly after.

It's an uncentralised belief system but is generally characterised by an anti-authority idea that they are not under the jurisdiction of the [government](#) and the [law](#) does not apply to them.

The movement has received a significant influx of followers in recent years as people retaliated against lockdowns, mask mandates and vaccination requirements.

Some may find videos of their arrests entertaining, but the beliefs can be far more dangerous than they might seem. Extremists within the movement have carried out violent crimes both in [Australia](#) and overseas.

So what exactly is a sovereign citizen? Here's what you need to know.

What do sovereign citizens believe?

Sovereign citizens – or "SovCits" – is a term for people who hold extreme anti-government views, essentially believing laws and regulations don't apply to them.

The idea is that, in the same way a country is a sovereign nation unconstrained by other nations' laws, a person is themselves a sovereign unconstrained by the laws of a government.

"It's a spectrum," David Heilpern, dean of law at Southern Cross University, told *Today Extra*.

"On the one hand, there are those who want to challenge the law by raising old doctrine common law doctrines and concepts of sovereignty. That's probably a positive thing.

"At the other end, there are those who simply refuse to comply with laws that apply to you and I. They see themselves as separate and different. They say they don't consent to the jurisdiction.

"And by their own declaration, they're not bound by laws."

The exact reasoning behind this varies within the movement – no surprise given its uncentralised nature – but the idea of false governments is a common one for sovereign citizens around the globe.

One prevalent thought is Redemption Theory, which asserts the US (which is where the movement began) went bankrupt in 1933 when it abandoned the gold standard. It claims the government then began using its citizens as collateral in agreements with other nations.

Redemption Theorists go on to claim each person, therefore, has a monetary value – up to millions of dollars – stored in a secret US Treasury Department account listed under someone else's name.

Some followers will also avoid entering into "contracts" with the government.

It's why many of them are pulled over for driving without a license or vehicle registration – or for just failing to produce such documents or provide their name and address when pulled over – and why you'll hear phrases like "I do not consent" during exchanges between sovereign citizens and police officers.

So are they actually exempt from taxation and able to drive without a license?

No. Just like anyone else, sovereign citizens must abide by the laws of the country they live in, including Australia.

"I was a magistrate for 22 years I saw a lot of these sovereign citizen arguments," Heilpern said.

"They hold no weight whatsoever. It's legal gobbledeygook."

That means they need to have a driver's license, pay their taxes, register their vehicle, and otherwise obey the law.

In a 2021 case in Queensland, a sovereign citizen charged with two drug offences tried to argue that the charges didn't apply to him.

Judge Glen Cash gave his arguments – and that of the entire movement – a scathing appraisal.

"Merely setting out the argument is sufficient to show it is nonsense," he wrote in his [decision](#).

"It is apparent that the applicant is one of a group of people who for some years have attempted, universally without success, to avoid the operation of laws with which they do not wish to comply... "Recognising that the arguments presented by [such] litigants are largely incoherent, if not incomprehensible, courts have been increasingly willing to dismiss their claims summarily."

So no, sovereign citizens are certainly not exempt from the law.

Where did the movement start and why can it be dangerous?

The sovereign citizen movement arose in the 1970s in America following the founding of anti-government group Posse Comitatus by William Porter Gale – a group which had "racist and antisemitic" origins, according to the Southern Poverty Law Centre, a social justice organisation in the US.

The movement rose in prominence and spread to different countries, including Australia, in the following decades, and has since received a notable boost during the pandemic.

"It's fair to say that one of the recalls of COVID was a disillusionment by a significant proportion of the public with government and with health, with law, with their connection with society," Heilpern said.

"They've gone looking elsewhere for justification for their views of 'these laws don't apply to me'."

While it's not necessarily inherently violent, extremists within the movement have committed violent crimes.

Mike Burgess, the ASIO director-general, mentioned the risk of sovereign extremists in his [2022 threat assessment speech](#).

"Some of the alleged violent acts at the recent Old Parliament House protest are a case in point. The individuals involved were driven by a diverse range of grievances, including anti-vaccination agendas, conspiracy theories and anti-government sovereign citizen beliefs."

Burgess isn't the only top intelligence official to warn of the dangers of such beliefs.

Back in 2011, the FBI's Counterterrorism Analysis Section stated it "considers sovereign-citizen extremists as comprising a domestic terrorist movement", and it remains a serious issue today.

"We know there's been many cases of violence from sovereign citizens in the US including shootings of police," Roose said.

"About 15 per cent of domestic terrorism load, according to the FBI, in the US over the last five years was sovereign citizens."

Most notable in Australia was the December 2022 ambush killing of two Queensland police constables Matthew Arnold and Rachel McCrow, and neighbour Alan Dare by Gareth, Stacey and Nathaniel Train. Gareth's internet behaviour unearthed after the shootings showed him promoting anti-government and anti-law enforcement ideologies.

"At that more extreme end, (the beliefs) can end up being pretty dangerous as we see in ... the connections between those involved with the sovereign citizen or pseudo law movement and horrible incidents like we saw in Queensland involving police late last year," Heilpern said.

	<p>As well as the Trains, notable extremist sovereign citizens include Terry Nichols, who helped plan the Oklahoma City bombing, and Jerry R Kane Jr and 16-year-old Joseph T. Kane, a father-son pair who killed two police officers in a traffic stop in Arkansas in 2010.</p> <p>For the most part, though, the movement has a legal focus, with followers using certain phrases in an attempt to demonstrate laws don't apply to them, and even conducting what's known as "paper terrorism" – filing bogus, frivolous and often excessive legal paperwork to harass and intimidate someone.</p> <p>"They bombard big firms with pseudo-legal paperwork, file bogus legal claims, they talk about arresting the police or the governor general or storming parliament and taking over," Roose said.</p> <p>"So there's different dimensions. It is a significant concern, as we've seen most recently up in Queensland."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Expert: 20 terrorist groups in Afghanistan
SOURCE	https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2023/01/26/twenty-terrorist-groups-with-foreign-objectives-operating-in-afghanistan/
GIST	<p>Twenty extremist groups are entrenched in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan with eyes on targets abroad, a security expert has said.</p> <p>In a chilling warning to the international community, Arian Sharifi suggested the landlocked country has become a breeding ground for terrorists looking to establish or re-establish themselves.</p> <p>It has been 17 months since the Taliban entered Afghanistan's capital Kabul and took control of the country. They have since implemented policies reminiscent of their brutal rule in the late 1990s, including banning woman from studying at universities and working for aid groups.</p> <p>After storming back into power, the Taliban promised the West it would not allow the country to serve as a platform for terrorists amid fears foreign groups could use it as a springboard to launch attacks elsewhere.</p> <p>But Dr Sharifi, a lecturer and associate research scholar at Princeton University in New Jersey, said the landscape today suggests the rulers have failed to live up to their commitment.</p> <p>He said the task for international leaders now is to decide if they can accept and deal with a Taliban-run government.</p> <p>"What is really missing and the policy on the part of the international community towards the Taliban is the clarity of policy over whether the world can actually accept and live with a Taliban-run government in Afghanistan," he told a panel discussion hosted by the Royal United Services Institute in London.</p> <p>"Can they really accept the potential consequences both to Afghanistan and the region and beyond from a Taliban-run Afghanistan?"</p> <p>Dr Sharifi outlined two areas which he said should be causes for concern for countries around the globe. "I did some research and I pinpointed 20 foreign terrorist and violent extremist groups currently in operation in Afghanistan.</p> <p>"These groups have objectives beyond Afghanistan, not in Afghanistan. So it's only a matter of time to see potentially some [evidence] of that terrorism in the region and beyond."</p> <p>He said the presence of such groups in the county also risks serving as inspiration for like-minded organisations in other parts of the world who may be plotting attacks of their own.</p>

Some extremists may even “pick up the trail that was left by [Al Qaeda](#)” to wage vicious campaigns to forward their agendas, the security expert noted.

Islamic State Khorasan Province ([ISIS-K](#)) has already claimed responsibility for numerous attacks in Afghanistan since the Taliban seized control.

[The Haqqani Network](#), responsible for some of the most high-profile attacks on western interests during the Afghan war, is also growing in influence.

Secondly, he said world leaders must admit that the main markets for Afghanistan-grown drugs which the Taliban is profiting from are western European nations and North America.

“Can the world really accept that?” he questioned. “Can the world really let the Taliban produce and procure this amount of drugs and send it to their capitals, into their main cities?”

The population of 14 million people has been “taken captive” by the Taliban, which is estimated to have about 70,000 members, he said.

“How long can this really continue the way they are dealing with women, the way they're dealing with minorities, the way they're running the country? There is literally no resemblance of a government and what the Taliban are doing.

“So in my view, at the very top strategic level, the world needs to decide what they're going to do with the Taliban.”

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HEADLINE	01/26 Rise in UK men referrals over incel ideology
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jan/26/large-rise-in-men-referred-to-prevent-over-women-hating-incel-ideology
GIST	<p>There has been a large rise in the number of young men referred to the government’s Prevent scheme over the women-hating “incel” ideology, official statistics have shown.</p> <p>A senior counter-terrorism officer described incel as an “emerging risk” making up 1% of all referrals to the anti-extremism scheme in the year to March 2022 – 77 cases – triggered by concerns that mainly young men were falling for its message.</p> <p>That figure compares with no recorded referrals in the year to March 2000, and just three referrals in the year to March 2021.</p> <p>Counter-terrorism officials believe the rise in reported cases is because of spread in the UK of its ideology – largely via the internet – and because of a growing awareness of its potential dangers among teachers and others who can refer cases to Prevent after the August 2021 Plymouth shooting.</p> <p>Jake Davison viewed incel websites and content before killing five people, an inquest has heard. Counter-terrorism police have said they do not believe the attack was motivated by incel propaganda.</p> <p>Davison, 22, shot his mother and four passersby, including a three-year-old girl before killing himself.</p> <p>Evidence in Britain is emerging of incel co-existing with other extremist violent ideologies. Luca Benincasa, 20, was jailed for six years on Wednesday for belonging to the extreme far-right Feuerkrieg Division. The court heard he also identified with incel culture.</p> <p>Incel has been the trigger for atrocities overseas. In 2018 a man in Toronto who identified with the movement murdered 10 people in a van attack, mowing down pedestrians on a pavement.</p>

The figures out on Thursday also showed that concerns about youngsters interested in school massacres made up 154 referrals, 2% of the total.

Det Ch Supt Maria Lovegrove, Prevent's national lead for counter-terrorism policing, said of the incel and school shooting statistics: "One of Prevent's crucial roles is providing important indicators of emerging risks, particularly in light of incidents in other parts of the world.

"Whilst not currently considered terrorist ideologies, they have the ability to inspire terrible acts of violence – and it is therefore important that Prevent works to disengage people from these beliefs.

"The number of these cases is very low, but it is encouraging that people feel confident to report concerns about risk of radicalisation, wherever this stems from."

Overall there were 6,406 referrals to Prevent last year, up 30% on the previous year. This is thought to be largely due to the lifting of pandemic restrictions with most referrals – 36% – coming from education.

Most cases were sent to other services. In the end 13% – 804 cases – were adopted by the scheme known as Channel, which deals with individuals thought to be at greatest risk of committing violence.

The Home Office said: "There were more adopted cases for individuals referred for concerns related to extreme rightwing radicalisation (339; 42%) compared [with] individuals with concerns related to Islamist radicalisation (156; 19%)."

Lovegrove said: "Established terrorist ideologies still pose the most significant threat of radicalisation, but young men who are fascinated by, and seek out, all types of extremist or violent content online are increasingly prevalent in referrals to Prevent."

A government review of Prevent is expected to be published soon and is expected to say the official counter-radicalisation scheme focuses too much on the extreme right, when the greatest threat of terrorist violence comes from Islamists.

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HEADLINE	01/27 UK teen extremist inspired killings jailed
SOURCE	https://news.sky.com/story/daniel-harris-british-teenage-extremist-whose-videos-were-linked-to-two-mass-murders-in-us-jailed-12795052
GIST	<p>A British teenage extremist has been jailed after his far-right videos were linked to two mass murders in the US.</p> <p>Daniel Harris used an online platform called World Truth Videos to disseminate a "call to arms" for his violent racist beliefs, a court heard.</p> <p>The 19-year-old from Glossop in Derbyshire was convicted of five counts of encouraging terrorism and one of possessing a 3D printer for the purposes of terrorism after a trial at Manchester Crown Court.</p> <p>He was sentenced to 11-and-a-half years in jail, and a further 3 years on licence.</p> <p>Prosecutors said US mass killer Payton Gendron was "encouraged and, in part, motivated to do what he did" by Harris.</p> <p>Gendron murdered 10 black people in a mass shooting in Buffalo, New York, in May 2022 while livestreaming the attack. Within hours, Harris produced a video celebrating the killing spree.</p> <p>Gendron, 19, had left a comment on one of Harris's videos two months before the mass shooting, saying: "You are not alone my friend :)".</p>

The video included lessons to be learned from Brenton Tarrant, who livestreamed an attack in which he [killed 51 people at mosques](#) in New Zealand in March 2019.

Gendron had also taken an image from another of Harris's videos and used it as the main image on his "manifesto".

Prosecutor Joe Allman said Gendron was "inspired" by Harris's material.

The British teenager also influenced Anderson Lee Aldrich, the only suspect in a [shooting at a gay bar in Colorado](#), the court was told.

Aldrich, 22, allegedly killed five people during an indiscriminate firearms attack in Colorado Springs, in November last year - while Harris was on trial in the UK.

Aldrich - who is yet to enter pleas over the Colorado shooting - "accessed material" produced by Harris, Mr Allman said.

The prosecutor told the court one of Harris's videos was posted on the "brother site" to a website with links to what appeared to be a livestream of Aldrich preparing to carry out the attacks.

Mr Allman said: "The Crown say it demonstrates that individuals of the greatest concern have accessed the material produced by Mr Harris."

Harris was described in court as an "influential online propagandist for a violent and deeply racist ideology".

His videos glorified mass killings and were "tantamount to a call to arms to those who shared, or who could be persuaded to share Mr Harris's world view," Mr Allman said.

Under the pseudonym "BookAnon", Harris's videos "encouraged and gave instructions for carrying out acts of terror against those deemed not to be part of the white European race," the court heard.

One video showed how to make an assault rifle using a 3D printer and when police raided Harris's grandfather's house, they found that he had begun making the parts himself.

'Toxic rhetoric with untold influence'

After the teenager's conviction, Detective Inspector Chris Brett said attempts were initially made to engage with Harris through the Prevent programme, which aims to stop people becoming terrorists.

"It soon became clear he was pretending to be deradicalised whilst encouraging terrorism online," Mr Brett added.

"The threat he caused meant we had to act in order to ensure the safety of the wider public."

Mr Brett said Harris "clearly demonstrated a disdain for law enforcement and public order, as well as an admiration for those who had committed atrocities in terrorist attacks overseas".

"By posting these videos online, Harris' toxic rhetoric could have had untold influence on countless people across the world - such actions will not be tolerated," the senior officer said.

He added that officers made "the rather chilling discovery of attempts to make component parts of a firearm printed from his 3D printer" during a search, which "showed a clear intent to create a deadly weapon".

HEADLINE	01/26 FBI: 'American Taliban' meets w/extremist
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/meetings-lindh-prompt-move-revoke-convicts-release-96691803
GIST	<p>FALLS CHURCH, Va. -- A northern Virginia man convicted nearly a decade ago of supporting the Islamic State group as a teenager has now been accused of violating his terms of release by meeting with convicted Taliban supporter John Walker Lindh.</p> <p>According to court documents, the FBI photographed Ali Shukri Amin meeting with Lindh on three different occasions in 2021 for about three hours. The document does not state where the meetings occurred. The meetings violate a condition of Amin's supervised release, which bars him from meeting with known extremists, prosecutors said.</p> <p>The meetings also could have constituted a violation of Lindh's supervised release when they occurred, but now Lindh is no longer subject to supervision, as his term of supervised release expired last year.</p> <p>It's not entirely clear why authorities used the meeting as a basis to claim a violation against Amin but not against Lindh, given that they both were barred from meeting with extremists.</p> <p>The court documents show, though, that authorities had reason to be concerned about Amin beyond his meetings with Lindh. Amin, who lives in Dumfries, is also accused of corresponding online with a British individual described as a "known extremist" until that person was arrested in February 2022 by British authorities.</p> <p>In his conversations with the British individual, authorities say Amin provided guidance related to the teachings of two Islamic preachers considered extremists by the FBI, according to the court document.</p> <p>The document also accuses Amin of using a virtual private network to conceal his online activity and evade the supervision of his parole officer.</p> <p>Michael Jensen, an investigator with the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, said terrorism defendants are assigned to veteran probation officers who devote significant time and energy to helping them transition back into their communities, and it's unusual to petition for revocation of supervised release.</p> <p>"(I)f a probation officer is petitioning the court to revoke supervised release, then they have significant concerns that the individual is not reintegrating into their community successfully and that they remain a potential threat," he said.</p> <p>It is clear, though, that the FBI and other agencies also continue to harbor concerns about Lindh's activity, ideology and continued radicalization after his release from prison in 2019. The court document describing Amin's meetings with Lindh state that Lindh "remains a known extremist and is believed by the FBI to hold extremist ideations."</p> <p>Lindh was the first American to face major terrorism charges after the Sept. 11 attacks. He was convicted of supplying services to the Taliban after he was captured in Afghanistan in the weeks after the 9-11 attacks fighting with Taliban forces against the U.S.-backed Northern Alliance.</p> <p>He was sentenced to 20 years in prison as part of a plea deal and was released from custody in 2019 after serving about 85% of his sentence, with the remainder reduced for good behavior.</p> <p>Shortly before he was released, a judge imposed additional restrictions on his three-year period of supervised release, in addition to the original conditions that included the ban on meeting with known extremists. The new requirements included monitoring software on his internet devices, requiring that his online communications be conducted in English, and forbidding him from possessing extremist material, holding a passport or leaving the U.S.</p>

Amin's case was notable primarily because of his age. It's rare for federal prosecutors to seek and obtain convictions against people under the age of 18. But Amin was 17 when he pleaded guilty in 2015 to helping the Islamic State group by using social media to provide advice and encouragement to the group and its supporters under the Twitter handle Amreekiwitness. Amreeki translates to "American."

He also admitted helping a classmate, 18-year-old Reza Niknejad, travel to Syria to join the Islamic State group.

He was sentenced to more than 11 years in prison but later had his sentence reduced to six years. Still, he filed multiple lawsuits and petitions seeking to have his conviction overturned. In one lawsuit he accused the FBI of "manipulating his underdeveloped juvenile brain" and contributing to his radicalization by placing his online activities under surveillance at a young age.

Even though he admitted his guilt, he argued that his online activities should have been protected free speech and that he was wrongly prosecuted "based on his profession of views which do not conform to the normative scope of American bipartisan consensus."

A hearing on whether to revoke Amin's supervised release is scheduled for Feb. 13. Amin's lawyer, Jessica Carmichael, declined to comment but is expected to file a motion on her client's behalf ahead of the hearing.

Judges have the option to send defendants back to prison or to extend their time on supervision, though in Amin's case he has already been sentenced to lifetime supervision.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Covid outbreak at Guantanamo Bay spreads
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/politics/covid-outbreak-guantanamo.html
GIST	<p>Four of the five men accused of plotting the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks have contracted Covid, according to legal staff members, as the coronavirus continued to move through a maximum-security prison for former C.I.A. detainees at Guantánamo Bay.</p> <p>The prisoner accused of masterminding the attacks, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, has not tested positive for the virus. But the other four defendants in the capital case have flulike symptoms and are in quarantine, the staff members said.</p> <p>Another detainee accused of being a terrorist leader, an Indonesian man known as Hambali, who lives on the same tier as Mr. Mohammed, tested positive on Wednesday, forcing the cancellation of meetings between prisoners and defense lawyers scheduled for the rest of the week.</p> <p>The outbreak apparently began in the adjacent Camp 6 prison, which holds 20 general population prisoners who have been approved for transfer with security assurances.</p> <p>Then last week, lawyers learned that a prisoner at the maximum-security Camp 5 had flulike symptoms and tested positive for the virus. The virus soon spread to others on his cellblock.</p> <p>It is believed to be the first coronavirus outbreak at the 70-cell prison housing Mr. Mohammed and 12 others.</p> <p>The military has declined to comment on the magnitude of the outbreak, among either the 35 wartime captives or the detention operation's 1,000-member staff of military members and civilians.</p> <p>Defense lawyers for the former C.I.A. prisoners have expressed concern about their clients throughout the pandemic. Most of those prisoners spent three and four years in agency custody, where they were brutalized at times, and have developed chronic illnesses.</p>

	<p>Troops working at the prison are required to be vaccinated. But some of the prisoners are distrustful of U.S. military medicine and have refused vaccines, according to lawyers and legal staff members who declined to be identified because of the classified nature of the prison and the sensitivity of detainee health issues.</p> <p>The prison has struggled to contain the virus since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. It shut down in-person legal meetings for more than a year and has at times allowed some detainees to consult legal counsel by video feed between the courtroom at Guantánamo and a secret site near the Pentagon.</p> <p>Clive Stafford Smith, a lawyer for several general population prisoners, said that he traveled to Guantánamo Bay this month for six scheduled meetings and that all but one were canceled because of a Covid outbreak among those prisoners.</p> <p>Mr. Stafford Smith said he was allowed a single visit with Mohammed Abdul Malik Bajabu, a Kenyan man who has been cleared for transfer with security arrangements.</p> <p>He left the base after a week of waiting for his meetings to be reinstated, and later heard from Justice Department lawyers that his three other clients had been placed in 10 days of quarantine.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Guilty: terror attack killed 8 on NY bike trail
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/nyregion/saipov-convicted-bike-path-truck-attack.html
GIST	<p>A man who raced a truck down a Hudson River bike path in 2017, killing eight people in what the authorities have called the deadliest terrorist attack in New York City since 9/11, was convicted of murder charges on Thursday by a federal jury and could now face the death penalty.</p> <p>The man, Sayfullo Saipov, a 34-year-old Uzbek native, said after his arrest that he was inspired to carry out the attack by Islamic State videos that he watched on his phone and that he chose a truck to inflict maximum damage against civilians. Mr. Saipov is the first defendant to face a federal death penalty trial during the administration of President Biden, who had campaigned against capital punishment.</p> <p>The Manhattan jury delivered its verdict shortly after 3 p.m. on its first full day of deliberations, after hearing wrenching testimony from survivors and relatives of people killed in the attack. The truck had plowed into bicyclists, sending riders flying into the air, crushing others on the ground and leaving broken truck parts, mangled bicycles and bodies scattered behind.</p> <p>The eight fatalities included six tourists, one from Belgium and five from Argentina. The other victims were a 23-year-old software engineer from Manhattan and a 32-year-old financial worker from New Jersey.</p> <p>Having convicted Mr. Saipov, the jury will now be asked to decide whether he should be imprisoned for life or face the death penalty, which would require a unanimous vote of the 12 jurors. The judge, Vernon S. Broderick of Federal District Court, set Feb. 6 for the penalty phase to begin.</p> <p>Mr. Saipov was found guilty of all 28 counts he faced. They included eight counts of murder in aid of racketeering activity — one for each victim killed — and one count of violence and destruction of a motor vehicle causing death. Those all carry a maximum sentence of death or life imprisonment.</p> <p>He was also convicted of one count of providing material support to a terrorist organization, ISIS, which carries a maximum life sentence, and 18 attempted murder counts.</p> <p>A few moments before the verdict was announced, a prosecutor, Amanda Houle, walked over to two women seated in the gallery, both relatives of victims who had been killed, and whispered briefly to them.</p> <p>Moments later, the two women leaned gently into each other, nodding as the clerk read aloud each count and the name of the victim associated with it — and said “guilty.”</p>

After Judge Broderick thanked everyone present, the two women embraced briefly. Then, one briskly left the courtroom, tears streaming down her face.

Mr. Saipov, wearing a mask over a scraggly beard, showed no outward emotion as the verdict was read. After the proceeding, his lead lawyer, David E. Patton, declined to comment outside the courthouse. A spokesman for Damian Williams, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, also declined to comment.

The government's decision to seek capital punishment against Mr. Saipov was originally made during the administration of President Donald J. Trump, who tweeted after the attack "SHOULD GET DEATH PENALTY!"

Later, the attorney general at the time directed federal prosecutors to seek Mr. Saipov's execution if he was convicted.

Last year, Mr. Saipov's lawyers asked the Justice Department under Mr. Biden to withdraw the death penalty request. But in September, writing to Judge Broderick, prosecutors said Attorney General Merrick B. Garland had decided that the government would continue to pursue capital punishment.

The government had argued that Mr. Saipov carried out the truck attack in order to become a member of the Islamic State, a terrorist group that once held authority over large areas in Iraq and Syria and had pledged to create a new Muslim caliphate.

"He turned a bike path into his battlefield," Jason A. Richman, another prosecutor, said during his closing argument on Tuesday. "He was happy about the terrorist attack he unleashed."

Mr. Richman noted that Mr. Saipov had asked to hang an ISIS flag in his hospital room at Bellevue Hospital Center, where he was interviewed by the F.B.I. after being shot in the abdomen by a New York police officer, ending his rampage.

"He told the F.B.I.: 'I committed this attack to do my part, my part for Allah, my part for my version of Islam, and my part for the caliphate, my part for ISIS,'" Mr. Richman said.

The government has said that a cellphone found in Mr. Saipov's truck contained roughly 90 videos, many ISIS-related, depicting, for example, the shooting or beheading of prisoners and instructions for making a roadside bomb. The phone also contained about 3,800 images, including many of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, then the leader of ISIS.

Mr. Saipov's lawyer, Mr. Patton, did not deny that his client had intentionally driven the truck that caused the deaths and injuries. "His actions were senseless, horrific, and there's no justification for them," Mr. Patton, the city's federal public defender, said in his summation.

"Nobody forced him to do this, and he's guilty of murder and assault among many other crimes — plain and simple," Mr. Patton said.

But Mr. Patton disputed the government's claim that Mr. Saipov carried out the attack in order to become an ISIS member — which Mr. Patton indicated was a critical distinction. All but two of the charges say Mr. Saipov committed the murders "for the purpose of gaining entrance to ISIS."

Mr. Patton argued that his client had merely been "steeped in ISIS propaganda," which encouraged followers to carry out martyrdom attacks around the world.

"He bought into all these notions of the caliphate and that it was a religious obligation for him to become a martyr and ascend to paradise," Mr. Patton said.

Mr. Patton appeared to be setting the stage for arguments during the death penalty phase of the trial that his client, in orchestrating the attack, was not trying to become an ISIS member but rather had been manipulated by ISIS propaganda.

The trial, coming more than five years after the attack, had been long delayed, largely because of the pandemic. Mr. Saipov did not testify. But the words of the victims and witnesses, often delivered through interpreters, were riveting as they recalled that sunny afternoon on the tree-lined path.

The first fatality was Ann-Laure Decadt, 31, the Belgian tourist, who had come to New York with her mother and two sisters.

One sister, Friedel, took the witness stand, carrying a bottle of water in one hand and a package of tissues in the other. Mr. Saipov, sitting at the defense table in a mask, stared at her.

As she began to describe their visit to the city, she wiped tears from her face and occasionally looked up at the ceiling. Mr. Saipov looked down into his lap.

Friedel said the family had visited Fifth Avenue, Central Park and Wall Street, had taken the ferry to Staten Island and had gone to the 9/11 Memorial in Lower Manhattan.

On Oct. 31, they were pedaling side by side on the bike path, she testified, when she heard a loud rattling noise — the sound of a rapidly approaching vehicle.

As she tried to turn to look, the truck must have passed her, she said, adding, “As of that point, I have only flashes of memory of what I saw.”

She said she remembered seeing Ann-Laure lying on the ground ahead of her. Her first thought was that the truck “might have driven over her head,” she testified. “I went over to my sister, and I just started screaming.”

Ann-Laure had a lifeless gaze, staring into the air with blood gushing from her mouth, she recalled.

Another sister, Justine, and their mother, Lieve, said that the trip was to be a celebration of the sisters’ birthdays and Lieve’s recovery from two bouts with breast cancer.

“It was supposed to be a fun trip, a girls’ trip,” Justine said.

The jury also heard from another Belgian family that was on the bike path that day.

Aristide Melissas, his wife, Marion Van Reeth, their son Daryl and their nephew Timothy Buytaert, had stopped at a traffic light near Pier 40 to take a photograph.

The light turned green. “I remember perfectly well what I said to the boys,” Mr. Melissas testified. “I said the last who reaches the One World tower, we will offer the ice cream.”

He heard “slippery tires” and a sound like “metal crushing” behind him as he was thrown into the air, he said.

Marion testified that she woke up in a hospital, where she learned that she had suffered a spinal cord injury, broken ribs and head wounds and had to have both legs amputated.

The five Argentine victims of the attack had been part of a group of 10 friends from high school, who had come to New York to celebrate the three decades since they had graduated.

One, Juan Pablo Trevisan, testified that the group was biking in pairs, one couple behind the next. They were heading south to visit the 9/11 Memorial and then planned to bike across the Brooklyn Bridge.

	<p>Mr. Trevisan recalled that he was talking with the bicyclist to his immediate left, Hernan Ferruchi, when he heard a strange sound, which he tried to imitate for the jury — “too-toom, too-toom, something like that,” Mr. Trevisan said.</p> <p>“It sounded like a very loud engine,” Mr. Trevisan testified. “It was as if a train were passing by.”</p> <p>Mr. Trevisan said he asked Mr. Ferruchi, on the left, if he had heard the sound. “He made a gesture as if he didn’t know,” Mr. Trevisan testified.</p> <p>It was then that the truck plowed through the group, striking and killing every rider on the left side of the column.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Muslim cleric convicted: recruiting for ISIS
SOURCE	https://nypost.com/2023/01/26/shaikh-abdullah-faisal-convicted-of-recruiting-isis-supporters-by-manhattan-district-attorney-alvin-bragg/
GIST	<p>A radical Islamic cleric was convicted of recruiting and providing support for ISIS, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg announced on Thursday.</p> <p>Shaikh Abdullah Faisal, 59, an Islamic State recruiter and marriage broker was found guilty of “far reaching crimes” of terrorism following New York state’s first ever terrorism trial, according to the DA’s office.</p> <p>Faisal, a Jamaica native who prosecutors described as “one of the most influential English speaking terrorists of our times,” preached violent jihad and pushed for ISIS recruitment on his social media platforms and tried to inspire others to commit acts of terror themselves in ISIS’ name.</p> <p>He additionally provided instructions on how potential fighters could best travel to Syria and Iraq undetected and worked as a matchmaker for women looking to get hitched to Islamic militants.</p> <p>Faisal was arrested in Jamaica in 2017 and then extradited to New York City following a joint investigation by the NYPD’s Intelligence Bureau and the Manhattan DA’s Office’s Counter Terrorism Program — which was established in 2015 to investigate extremists and thwart terror plots, according to the DA’s office.</p> <p>In 2016, Faisal began communicating with an undercover NYPD officer via email, text and video chat from his home in Jamaica in a bid to encourage her to travel to the Middle East to join ISIS and carry out attacks. He also offered to introduce the woman — who was posing as a would-be jihadist — to a suitable husband within the terror group.</p> <p>The militant, who previously went by Trevor William Forrest, urged the undercover officer to listen to his online speeches and lectures in which he encouraged followers to wage jihad against enemies of Islam and even kill Americans, Jews and Hindus.</p> <p>“The way forward is not the ballot. The way forward is the bullet,” he said in one speech, according to his indictment. In another he urged followers to “cut the throats” of nonbelievers with machetes.</p> <p>Faisal was previously convicted in the United Kingdom in 2003 for inciting murder and using racially charged, hateful rhetoric to support terrorist ideologies.</p> <p>“This case was about the far reach of crimes committed by Shaikh Faisal and the promotion of terrorism. Faisal aided ISIS as it committed horrific violence against innocent people,” said District Attorney Bragg in a statement.</p>

	<p>He was found guilty on all five counts he was charged with, including conspiracy as a crime of terrorism and soliciting or providing support for an act of terrorism. The charges carry potential sentences ranging from seven to 25 years in prison.</p> <p>He is scheduled to be sentenced on February 9, the DA's office said.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Military raid in Somalia kills IS top leader
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/top-islamic-state-leader-killed-us-raid-somalia/story?id=96701080
GIST	<p>A risky military ground raid by U.S. special operations forces on a cave complex in northern Somalia on Wednesday night killed Bilal al-Sudani, a top leader and organizer with the Islamic State, U.S. officials said.</p> <p>Al-Sudani was killed in a firefight along with 10 other fighters, according to the officials. There were no U.S. casualties in the raid, the officials said, emphasizing that there were also no civilian casualties -- though officials later clarified that one of the U.S. service members had suffered a dog bite from a dog serving with U.S. forces.</p> <p>The officials said President Joe Biden had authorized the raid earlier this week after conferring with his national security team. The U.S. forces that conducted the raid had rehearsed it many times at a mock-up facility that simulated the target area -- a technique similar to what U.S. special operations forces did prior to the 2011 raid that killed Osama bin Laden at a compound in Pakistan.</p> <p>U.S. forces had prepared for the possibility of capturing al-Sudani, the officials said, "but the hostile forces response to the operation resulted in his death." The officials refused to say whether the timing of the operation indicated that there was an imminent attack threat to the U.S.</p> <p>"On January 25, on orders from the President, the U.S. military conducted an assault operation in northern Somalia that resulted in the death of a number of ISIS members, including Bilal-al-Sudani, an ISIS leader in Somalia and a key facilitator for ISIS's global network," Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement.</p> <p>"Al-Sudani was responsible for fostering the growing presence of ISIS in Africa and for funding the group's operations worldwide, including in Afghanistan," Austin continued.</p> <p>"This action leaves the United States and its partners safer and more secure, and it reflects our steadfast commitment to protecting Americans from the threat of terrorism at home and abroad," he said, praising "our extraordinary service members as well as our intelligence community and other interagency partners for their support to this successful counterterrorism operation."</p> <p>U.S. officials who briefed reporters on the raid described al-Sudani as a notorious extremist.</p> <p>"[He] has a long history as a terrorist in Somalia. Before he joined ISIS, he was designated by the U.S. Treasury Department in 2012 for his role in [the group] Shabaab, helping foreign fighters to travel to an Al Shabaab training camp, facilitating financing for foreign violent extremists in Somalia," one of the two U.S. officials told reporters.</p> <p>"This operation was the result of extraordinary coordination and careful planning across all elements of the U.S. government for many months," one of the officials said, noting having first seen the first intelligence on al-Sudani's whereabouts months ago.</p> <p>"An intended capture operation was ultimately determined to be the best option to maximize the intelligence value of the operation and increase its precision in challenging terrain," an official said. "At the same time, and based on extensive past experience, we recognize that even an intended capture operation might well result in al Sudani's death -- as ultimately it did."</p>

	<p>The officials indicated that targeting terrorists remained among the government's top priorities.</p> <p>“Through this operation and others, President Biden has made it very clear: We are committed to finding and eliminating terrorist threats to the United States and to the American people, wherever they are hiding, no matter how remote. That's the context for understanding yesterday's operation,” one of the officials said.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	01/26 Lunar New Year or Chinese New Year?
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2023/jan/26/anger-simmers-lunar-replaces-chinese-new-year/
GIST	<p>SEOUL — Just whose new year is it, anyway?</p> <p>The venerable British Museum was the latest to be dragooned into the Asian culture wars when it publicized a performance by a South Korean entertainment troupe over the traditional East Asian holiday season this week, urging the public to join a celebration of the “Korean Lunar New Year.”</p> <p>That sparked a furious online backlash.</p> <p>“Stop appropriating my culture, it’s Chinese new year” was one of the more restrained responses on Twitter. The museum swiftly retreated by posting a traditional Chinese painting with the hashtag “Chinese New Year.”</p> <p>Screen captures of the original tweet circulated online, providing fresh fodder for a raging debate over what to call the celebration. Is the “Lunar New Year” or, worse, the “Korean Lunar New Year” a cultural appropriation seeking to deny the day’s Chinese roots? Or is “Chinese New Year” just one more example of the Middle Kingdom’s ingrained insensitivity toward “lesser” cultures on its periphery?</p> <p>At a time when a resurgent China is once more towering over Asia, the debate has become a soft-power flashpoint: Should the holiday be dubbed the “Chinese” or “Lunar” New Year?</p> <p>Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in his two-paragraph statement marking the new year this week, managed not to use the words China or Chinese in his message.</p> <p>“I wish all observing the Lunar New Year around the world good health, peace, and good fortune,” Mr. Blinken’s message read in part. “This is a time of celebration and optimism for the coming year, and I particularly wish to recognize the millions of Asian Americans who celebrate this new lunar year. You are an essential part of our American tapestry.”</p> <p>The State Department’s use of “Lunar” raised Chinese hackles and the stakes in the debate.</p> <p>Culture and power</p> <p>Unquestionably, the festival originated in the font of ancient East Asian culture, China, which has always marked the inauguration of a new year by the lunar rather than the solar calendar. From there, the new year, or spring festival, spread to the China-influenced kingdoms on the empire’s flanks in Korea and Vietnam. Today, it is widely celebrated across the region and among the East Asian diaspora globally.</p> <p>Korea and Vietnam sourced many traditions from the “Middle Kingdom.” Chinese takeaways included writing systems of Chinese ideographs, philosophies such as Confucianism, religions such as Buddhism, medical techniques such as acupuncture, literary classics and martial arts.</p>

Yet the peripheral states chafed at times against the center's influence. As part of a cultural divergence, Korea and Vietnam each created its own writing system. Politically, both fought wars against China, including in the 20th century.

A chaos-wracked China, bedeviled by imperial aggression, was dubbed "The Sick Man of Asia" for much of the 19th and 20th centuries. The ancient cultural powerhouse began to regain its regional heft under Mao Zedong's red banner, and China fought the U.S. and its allies to a standstill in Korea.

China's rise as an economic and military superpower, bolstered by a newly enriched middle class, gave fresh impetus to Chinese influence and assertiveness. With the internet enabling real-time, cross-border debate, they are piling onto multiple issues — robustly.

One Chinese critic of the U.S. adoption of "Lunar New Year" called Mr. Blinken a "sinophobic, warmongering top diplomat."

Curiously, the issue does not arise in the local languages. In Chinese, xinnian means "new year." In Korean, seollal is "new year's day." In Vietnamese, tet simply means "festival. So it is in the global lingua franca, English, where the battle lines are drawn.

Defenders of "Chinese New Year" argue that China originated the holiday. Moreover, they say, "Lunar New Year" is imprecise because there are multiple lunar calendars worldwide.

Defenders of "Lunar New Year" point out that, regardless of its origins, the holiday as it is celebrated today is not exclusive to Chinese.

The controversy can catch many unaware. Members of the K-pop band Girls' Generation were lambasted on social media for using Seollal and "Lunar New Year" by Chinese netizens, according to South Korean media. One defender of the group fumed that Korea had been suffering from overbearing Chinese "for 3,000 years."

It works both ways. Portuguese soccer superstar Cristiano Ronaldo took flak from Korean netizens after wishing his fans a "Happy Chinese New Year."

Ill will

Such linguistic squabbles may seem petty to outsiders, but they contribute to an atmosphere of growing ill will and tension.

A 2022 global poll on "Sinophone Borderlands" conducted by multiple institutes worldwide found that Koreans dislike China more than any other nation. More than 81% expressed "negative" or "very negative" reactions. In addition to air pollution, COVID-19 and authoritarian governance, the survey found, "cultural appropriation" was a core issue for South Koreans.

The findings of this and other polls mark a seismic shift. For decades, Koreans expressed antipathy for the Japanese for their Pacific war atrocities and said the Japanese refused to apologize. Now, more vitriol is aimed at China.

Kim Ji-myung, who founded the Korea Institute of Simultaneous Interpretation, accuses China of heavy-handedness.

"There is a long history of, if you wanted to inscribe your cultural heritage to UNESCO, China would submit objections as they would insist the roots of Korean culture are Chinese and they own it," Ms. Kim said. "Chinese are too authoritarian and greedy. They behave like Big Brother."

Politicians are compelled to respond to public ire.

During South Korea's presidential election last year, both candidates were drawn into a furious online debate in which Koreans accused Chinese of appropriating their traditional national clothing style known as hanbok. Chinese partisans insisted that hanbok was based on Ming Dynasty originals.

Washington weighs in

With the U.S. engaged in its own multi-domain competition with China, it was no surprise that American diplomats sided with Seoul in the hanbok debate.

Now there are suspicions that the Biden administration is sticking it to Beijing in the Chinese versus Lunar dispute.

The Hong Kong-based online media outlet Fridayeveryday cited the "Lunar New Year" greeting tweeted by Mr. Blinken. The greeting includes an image of traditional red envelopes (offering cash gifts during the holiday) that are turned face down to hide the Chinese characters on the front, Fridayeveryday claims.

"When Biden turned the red packet upside down in his graphic, it just became ridiculous," said Nury Vittachi, editor of Fridayeveryday, which promotes the virtues of Hong Kong and pushes back against what it considers Western media disinformation about China.

Mr. Vittachi said virulent anti-China voices have been urging the U.S. to switch from "Chinese" to "Lunar" over the past two years.

A State Department official said "Lunar" has been in use for some 30 years. A search of the U.S. Embassy website in Beijing came up with just a single mention of "Chinese New Year" amid a multitude of "Lunar" references.

A lexical shift is clearly underway.

A survey of official city websites shows that London uses "Chinese," San Francisco uses both "Chinese" and "Lunar," and New York, Sydney and the Vatican prefer "Lunar."

Beyond these "China versus the rest" politics and squabbles, angst is appearing among those who identify ethnically, rather than nationally, as Chinese.

"Businesses and government organizations are increasingly using the name 'Lunar New Year' to promote multiculturalism and inclusion by acknowledging the festival is celebrated by many Asian cultures," Australia's Bastion Insights said in an article this week. Yet "renaming the festival ... created fear and concerns around loss of cultural identity and autonomy among Australia's 1.4 million-strong Chinese community."

Some media outlets have suggested a combination — "Chinese Lunar New Year" — as a solution.

In that, Chinese officialdom may be ahead of their bristling netizens. State-run English language media such as Global Times and Xinhua already use the longer format.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Classified documents girl's school project
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/how-classified-documents-became-a-schoolgirls-show-and-tell/
GIST	WASHINGTON (AP) — On a winter's day in 1984, a briefcase stuffed with classified government documents showed up in a building in Pittsburgh, borne by someone who most certainly wasn't supposed to have them.

That someone was 13-year-old Kristin Preble. She took the papers to school as a show-and-tell project for her eighth grade class. Her dad had found them in his Cleveland hotel room several years earlier and taken them home as a souvenir.

As a different sort of show and tell unfolds in Washington over the mishandling of state secrets by the Trump and now Biden administrations, the schoolgirl episode from four decades ago stands as a reminder that other presidents, too, have let secure information spill.

The Grade 8 escapade and one known as Debategate both involved the mishandling of classified documents that Democratic President Jimmy Carter used to prepare for a debate with Republican rival Ronald Reagan in Cleveland on Oct. 28, 1980. In the latter instance, the Reagan campaign obtained — some said stole — Carter’s briefing materials for the debate.

In today’s docu-dramas, special counsels have been assigned to investigate Donald Trump’s post-presidential cache of classified documents, which he initially resisted turning over, and Joe Biden’s pre-presidential stashes, which he willingly gave up when they were discovered but did not disclose to the public for months.

With classified material also found at former Vice President Mike Pence’s home, there is now a palpable sense in the halls of power that as more officials or ex-officials scour their cabinets or closets, more such oops moments will emerge.

On Thursday, the National Archives wrote to representatives of all ex-presidents and ex-vice presidents back to the Reagan administration to ask that their personal records be checked anew for any classified documents, according to two people familiar with the matter. They were not authorized to speak about document investigations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Carter files fell into Kristin’s hands through a somewhat meandering route.

Two days after the 1980 debate, businessman Alan Preble found the papers in his Cleveland hotel room, apparently left behind by Carter press secretary Jody Powell. Preble took them to his Franklin Park home, where they sat for more than three years as a faintly appreciated keepsake.

“We had looked through them but didn’t think they were important,” Carol Preble, Kristin’s mother, said back then, apparently unimpressed by the classified markings. But for social studies class, Kristin “thought they’d be real interesting. I thought they’d be great, too.”

Off the girl went to Ingomar Middle School on Jan. 19, 1984, with the zippered briefcase.

Teacher Jim DeLisio’s eyes popped when he saw the warnings on the documents inside. Among them: “Classified, Confidential, Executive” and “Property of the United States Government.”

“I truly didn’t want to look at it,” he said then. “I was just too ... scared. I didn’t want to know.”

Curiosity got the better of him. That night, he said, he and his wife and daughter pored over the documents, containing “everything you’d want to know from A to Z” on world and U.S. developments. One folder was marked “Iran.” Libya was also in the mix.

Unable to reach Kristin’s family by phone, DeLisio the next day called the FBI, which swiftly retrieved the papers.

A Justice Department official who spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity at the time said the bundle of documents was 4 inches (10 centimeters) thick.

Despite steering the secrets back to their proper place, DeLisio was reprimanded by school officials for calling the authorities before reaching the Preble family or them. The discovery fed into a broader

	<p>investigation by a Democratic-led congressional committee of the official Carter papers obtained by the winning Reagan campaign.</p> <p>The Reagan Justice Department declined calls by the committee to appoint a special counsel in that matter. A court case trying to force that appointment failed, and no criminal case was brought. Debategate faded, but not the concern over how classified documents are handled by those in power.</p> <p>As for Kristin, she earned a niche in history and a “B” on her school project.</p>
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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	01/26 Germany: treason arrest; info to Russia
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2023/01/26/germany-man-arrested-treason-russia/4991674749822/
GIST	<p>Jan. 26 (UPI) -- German authorities said Thursday they have arrested a man identified only as Arthur E. for alleged treason. He's accused of passing classified information from Germany's Federal Intelligence Service to a Russian intelligence service.</p> <p>Arthur E., who was arrested Sunday, is believed to be connected to an alleged Russian spy arrested in December, and German authorities said in Thursday's statement he "is strongly suspected of being an accomplice to treason."</p> <p>The German Federal Public Prosecutor's Office statement said, "Arthur E. is acquainted with Carsten L., who was arrested on Dec. 21, 2022. In 2022, he transmitted information that he had obtained in the course of his professional activity at the Federal Intelligence Service to a Russian intelligence service. Arthur E. brought the information to Russia and gave it to the intelligence service there. Arthur E. is not an employee of the Federal Intelligence Service."</p> <p>Carsten L., an employee of Germany's Foreign intelligence Service, was charged with passing classified information to Russia.</p> <p>He was convicted and sentenced to eight years in prison for passing the information to Russia and giving documents to the CIA.</p> <p>German Federal Office for Information Security President Arne Schönbohm was fired in October over allegations of close ties to Russia. He had ties to Protelion, a Russian cybersecurity firm founded as Infotecs by a former KGB engineer.</p> <p>The investigation into Arthur E. was conducted by Germany's Federal Intelligence Service "with the support of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation."</p> <p>Arthur E. was arrested in Munich as he arrived on a flight from the United States, according to the German Attorney General's office.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/27 Gunman kills 1 in Azerbaijan embassy Iran
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/iran-politics-azerbaijan-government-fires-4c9c54dc12677ff47fe48acd84291337
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A man armed with a Kalashnikov-style rifle stormed the Azerbaijan Embassy in Iran's capital Friday, killing the head of security at the diplomatic post and wounding two guards, authorities said.</p>

Tehran's police chief, Gen. Hossein Rahimi, blamed the attack on "personal and family problems," according to Iranian state television. However, the assault comes as tensions have been high for months between neighboring Azerbaijan and Iran.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said it would evacuate its diplomatic mission, accusing Iran of not taking reported threats against it seriously in the past. Meanwhile, Iranian authorities replaced Rahimi as police chief hours later after footage emerged that appeared to show a police officer doing nothing to stop the attack.

Video purportedly from the scene of the attack showed an empty diplomatic police post just near the embassy, with one man apparently wounded in an SUV parked outside. Inside the embassy past a metal detector, paramedics stood over what appeared to be a lifeless body in a small office as blood pooled on the floor beneath.

A statement from Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said that "an investigation is currently underway into this treacherous attack." The ministry also described the attacker as destroying a guard post with assault rifle fire before being stopped by the wounded guards, whom authorities described as being in a "satisfactory" condition after being shot.

However, the ministry said a "recent anti-Azerbaijani campaign against our country in Iran has encouraged such attacks against our diplomatic mission."

"There have been attempts to threaten our diplomatic mission in Iran before, and measures to prevent such situations and to ensure the safety of our diplomatic missions have been constantly raised before Iran," the ministry said. "Unfortunately, the last bloody terrorist attack demonstrates the serious consequences of not showing proper sensitivity to our urgent appeals in this direction."

Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev called the attack a "terrorist act."

"A terrorist attack against diplomatic missions is unacceptable!" he said in a statement.

Iranian state TV had quoted Rahimi as saying the gunman had entered the embassy with his two children during the attack. However, surveillance footage from inside the embassy released in Azerbaijan, which matched details of the other video of the aftermath and bore a timestamp matching the Azerbaijan Foreign Ministry's statement, showed the gunmen burst through the embassy's doors alone.

Those inside tried to push through metal detectors to take cover. The man opens fire with the rifle, its muzzle flashing, as he chases after the men into the small side office. Another man bursts from a side door and fights the gunman for the rifle as the footage ends.

Another surveillance video from outside the embassy which also corresponded to the same details showed the gunman slam his car into another in front of the embassy. The gunman then got out and leveled his rifle at a figure inside of the Iranian police stand, likely a police guard, who stood still and did nothing as the man stormed the embassy.

Associated Press journalists saw the embassy's front door pocked with bullet holes after the attack.

Iranian prosecutor Mohammad Shahrari reportedly said that the gunman's wife had disappeared in April after a visit to the embassy. The Iranian judiciary's Mizan news agency quoted Shahrari as saying the gunman believed his wife was still in the embassy at the time of the attack — even though it was some eight months later.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Nasser Kanaani, also said his country strongly condemned the attack, which was under investigation with "high priority and sensitivity."

Azerbaijan borders Iran's northwest. There have been tensions between the two countries as Azerbaijan and Armenia have fought over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Iran in October launched a military exercise near the Azerbaijan border, flexing its martial might amid the nationwide protests rocking the Islamic Republic. Azerbaijan also maintains close ties to Israel, which Tehran views as its top regional enemy. The Islamic Republic and Israel are locked in an ongoing shadow war as Iran's nuclear program rapidly enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

Turkey, which has close ties to Azerbaijan, condemned the attack, called for the perpetrators to be brought to justice and for measures to be put in place to prevent similar attacks in the future. Turkey has backed Azerbaijan against Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Turkey, which has been subjected to similar attacks in the past, deeply shares the pain of the Azerbaijani people," a Turkish Foreign Ministry statement said. "Brotherly Azerbaijan is not alone. Our support to Azerbaijan will continue without interruption, as it always has."

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HEADLINE	01/26 Renton PD: cars stolen in TikTok challenge
SOURCE	https://www.yahoo.com/news/alarming-number-cars-stolen-renton-000421318.html
GIST	<p>An alarming number of cars have been stolen in Renton over the last two months, according to Renton police.</p> <p>A majority of those cars are made in South Korea.</p> <p>In December, 116 cars were reported stolen and that number has gone up in January, Detective Robert Onishi with the Renton Police Department said.</p> <p>"We've had 148 cars reported stolen cars this month," said Onishi.</p> <p>Onishi said last year, on average, about four cars were stolen per day, but this week they are noticing a different trend.</p> <p>"So we had, just for the past three days, 23rd, 24th, and 25th, we had a total of 21 stolen vehicle reports," said Onishi. "That was six for the 23rd, five for the 24th and then 10 yesterday."</p> <p>Most of these cars are made by sister companies, Kia and Hyundai.</p> <p>"Yesterday's 10 reports were for one stolen Ford F-150 and nine stolen Hyundai's or Kia's," said Onishi. One of those cars belongs to Kaydra Kerr.</p> <p>"I discovered it missing last night at 6:30 p.m. when I was trying to go to the grocery store to get some veggies," said Kerr.</p> <p>As our KIRO 7 crew was talking with Kerr, a neighbor approached them and said the thieves also tried to steal his sister's Kia.</p> <p>"We came out and the back passenger side was broken, and it looks like they tried to steal the car because they pulled apart everything," said Zik Uduman.</p> <p>Renton police said there's been an uptick since the TikTok Kia challenge started last summer, which essentially shows how to hot-wire these cars.</p> <p>Monday, the City of Seattle filed a lawsuit against Kia and Hyundai for failing to install anti-theft technology in some vehicles.</p>

	<p>In a statement, Hyundai said they “believe the lawsuit is improper and unnecessary, and promises to release a new software update next month at no cost to owners, in hopes of deterring thieves.”</p> <p>In the meantime, police say a simple but effective solution is using a CLUB to lock the steering wheel when you’re away from your car.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Ex-Fla. cops accused of beating man; jailed
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/ex-florida-police-officers-accused-of-beating-homeless-man/
GIST	<p>MIAMI (AP) — Two former South Florida police officers turned themselves in Thursday morning to face felony charges over the beating of a homeless man who had been drinking outside a shopping center last month, officials said.</p> <p>Lorenzo Orfila, 27, and Rafael Otano, 22, were booked into jail on Thursday morning in Miami. They were each charged with kidnapping and battery, and Orfila was also charged with official misconduct, Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle said during a news conference.</p> <p>She said the officers were dispatched to the shopping center on the afternoon of Dec. 17 regarding a homeless man who was known to frequent the area. They handcuffed the man, put him in a patrol car and drove to a remote location several miles away.</p> <p>“There he was taken out of the marked car and while handcuffed, he was allegedly beaten and thrown to the ground by the officers,” Fernandez Rundle said.</p> <p>The man later told investigators that he was left there, unconscious and unhandcuffed. He began walking and was spotted by an off-duty Hialeah police officer who was walking his dog, Fernandez Rundle said. That officer called 911.</p> <p>She said that through surveillance video taken from the shopping center investigators were not able to identify “any violations that would have prompted or justified taking him into custody.”</p> <p>Some 12 days into the investigation, detectives learned that a civilian had approached the victim and offered him \$1,200 to recant his original statement. The victim later told detectives that he took the money “because he’s homeless and he’s unemployed” and said that his original statement was correct, Fernandez Rundle said.</p> <p>The civilian was charged with witness tampering.</p> <p>Hialeah police Chief George Funete said the behavior “will not be tolerated,” adding that both officers were removed from their patrol duties after the incident was reported, and then fired once the investigation was completed.</p> <p>It was not immediately known whether Orfila and Otano have retained lawyers who can speak on their behalf.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 US Capitol Police: 7501 threat cases in 2022
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/u-s-capitol-police-investigated-7501-threat-cases-in-2022/
GIST	<p>Last year the number of threat investigations by the United States Capitol Police (USCP) decreased, but the caseload remains historically high.</p> <p>In 2022, the USCP Threat Assessment Section (TAS) investigated a total of 7,501 cases. That number includes investigations into concerning statements and direct threats.</p>

“The threats against Members of Congress are still too high,” said U.S. Capitol Police Chief Tom Manger. “This has resulted in a necessary expansion of, not only our investigative capabilities, but our protection responsibilities as well. While that work is ongoing, everyone continuing to decrease violent political rhetoric across the country is the best way to keep everyone safe.”

Here are the TAS case numbers for the last five years:

- 9,625 in 2021
- 8,613 in 2020
- 6,955 in 2019
- 5,206 in 2018
- 3,939 in 2017

“Overall, during the last couple of decades the Threat Assessment Section’s caseload has increased because people on social media have a false sense of anonymity and feel more emboldened,” said Dr. Mario Scalora, the U.S. Capitol Police’s consulting psychologist. “This is not a problem we can only arrest our way out of.”

All Members of Congress receive threats and concerning statements. The number of threats against both parties are similar.

“Despite the fact that we have so many cases, our agents do a fantastic job prioritizing the most serious threats,” said Acting Assistant Chief of Intelligence and Protective Operations Jason Bell.

For safety reasons, the USCP does not discuss the specific security measures that are in place to protect the Members of Congress. However, the Department can provide an overview of recent improvements. In 2021, the USCP opened field offices to swiftly deal with threats where the Department has the most threats against Members of both parties – Florida and California. These new field agents are not investigating cases related to the January 6, 2021, attack.

To better protect everyone in the Legislative Branch, the United States Capitol Police has hired its own attorneys and detailed them to the Department of Justice (DOJ) to work as prosecutors who specialize in the unique types of threat cases faced by Congress. 28 U.S. Code 543 allows the DOJ to appoint these Special Assistant U.S. Attorney’s (SAUSAs). The SAUSAs work is controlled and assigned by the U.S. Attorney’s Office (USAO). Other law enforcement agencies have also had SAUSAs. The SAUSAs will not prosecute cases related to the January 6, 2021, attack.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Haiti: rebel police rampage thru capital
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/26/haiti-rebel-police-rampage-gang-killings-protest
GIST	<p>Disgruntled police officers have rampaged through the streets of Haiti’s capital of Port-au-Prince, blocking roads and forcing their way into the country’s main airport where they briefly prevented prime minister Ariel Henry from leaving. Later there were reports of heavy gunfire near his official residence.</p> <p>Police are protesting the killings of officers by Haitian gangs. At least 10 officers have been murdered in the past week; another is missing and one more has severe bullet wounds, according to the Haitian national police.</p> <p>The killings are just the latest example of escalating violence in the Caribbean nation, which has been gripped by gang wars and political chaos after the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. His unelected successor has asked for an international military intervention to combat the gangs, but no country has been willing to put boots on the ground.</p> <p>The deaths enraged members of Fantom 509, an armed group of current and former police officers that have violently demanded better conditions for officers.</p>

Protesters in civilian clothes who identified themselves as police first attacked prime minister Ariel Henry's official residence, according to a Reuters witness - at one point, breaking down one of the gates outside his home. They then flooded the airport as Henry was arriving back from a trip to Argentina.

Henry was temporarily stuck in the airport, unable to leave, but returned to his residence in Port-au-Prince later on Thursday, followed by police protesters. A Reuters witness heard heavy gunfire near his home.

Earlier in the day, dozens of police wove through the city, many wearing hoods along with police uniforms, flak jackets and rifles and automatic weapons. They seized buses to blockade roads and torched tires across the city, leaving smoke billowing through the streets.

Many demanded tougher crackdowns on the gangs and called for an end to the current government of Henry, which many Haitians view as illegitimate.

"If they are killing police officers, me as a citizen, what should I do?" one protester in a mask screamed into an Associated Press camera. "The police are second only to God and we're going to stand behind them."

Local media reported that armed men were robbing foreign passengers in the car park of the city's airport.

One video filmed by local media showed a group of men, some of them wearing shirts with the word "Police" written on them, heatedly arguing with uniformed officers at the airport and then appearing to walk past the officers without struggle.

A video recorded by local Haitian media shows empty streets and closed businesses on a key road in Port-au-Prince where the rebel group passed through.

Police anger has been inflamed by a video circulated on social media showing the naked and bloodied bodies of six officers stretched out on the dirt, their guns lying on their chests. The gang which killed them, known as Gan Grif, still has the bodies, police said.

In addition to the bodies displayed by the gang, a number of officers were killed last week in a skirmish with gangs in a neighbourhood that was once considered relatively safe.

The Haitian national police expressed condolences to the slain officers' families and colleagues, and said it was "calling for peace and invites police officers to come together to bring forward an institutional response to the different criminal organizations that terrorize the Haitian people".

The United Nations estimates that 60% of Port-au-Prince is controlled by the gangs. On the streets of the capital, Haitians say it is more like 100%.

This week, the UN special envoy for Haiti urged the US and Canadian governments to lead an international armed force to help Haiti combat the gangs. Haitian police, meanwhile, are pleading for more resources.

Some on the streets said they would continue to protest.

"The movement will continue, we can't let police get killed like this," said one masked man in a police uniform carrying a pistol who did not want to be identified. "We can do the job if they give us ammunition."

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HEADLINE	01/26 Violent crime rates fell slightly some cities
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/crime-data-2022.html
GIST	Violent crime rates in some major cities declined last year but have yet to recover from a 2020 surge associated with the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a report released Thursday.

The [report](#), by the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice, examined trends in 35 cities and found that while homicides, gun assaults and reports of domestic violence declined slightly in 2022 compared with the year before, some property crimes have worsened. In some cities, car thefts in particular have spiked, the report found.

Nationwide, crime has been steadily declining for most of the last quarter century, starting in the early 1990s. And while the full picture on crime rates is nuanced, interpretation of the data has often [become deeply politicized](#).

The report from the Council, a think tank that focuses on criminal justice issues, examined crime in cities that were selected based on the availability of crime data.

Material in the report was limited somewhat by cities' uneven reporting of crime statistics. For example, although the report found that gun assaults and reports of domestic violence fell slightly, the authors cautioned that only about a dozen cities reported data for those categories.

The crime-tracking project began in the early days of the pandemic, as violent crime began to rise. The report reflects an effort — although limited because it focuses on a relatively small number of mostly large cities — to publish timely crime data that is national in scope.

The F.B.I. also shares national statistics on crime but transitioned to a new reporting system in 2021, [complicating efforts to assess trends](#) in crime more generally.

“There’s a real void to be filled, and we’ve tried to do it,” said Richard Rosenfeld, a professor of criminology and criminal justice at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and lead author of the report.

“But there’s no reason why private entities should be doing the job of our federal statistical agencies.”

The study found that, on average, the number of murders declined by 4 percent between 2021 and 2022 — a decrease of 242 homicides in 27 cities that reported data — though that rate remained 34 percent higher than it was in 2019. Still, the report notes, the total number of homicides in those cities was about half as high as it was during the historical peaks, which occurred in 1980 and 1991.

Changes in homicide rates varied widely between cities. Thirteen cities reported increases in homicides from 2021 to 2022, ranging from Houston, which reported a marginal increase of less than 1 percent, to Raleigh, N.C., which reported a 48 percent increase. By contrast, 14 cities either had no change or had reductions in homicides. They include St. Louis, where murder rates were unchanged, and Richmond, Va., which saw a 40 percent reduction.

The report found that, on average, robberies increased by 5.5 percent in 2022 over 2021, nonresidential burglaries increased by 11 percent, and larcenies increased by 8 percent. However, each of those crime rates remained lower than they were in 2019.

“In no case did we find crime rates returning to prepandemic 2019 levels,” Professor Rosenfeld said. “Violent crimes still remain above those levels, and the property crimes, despite the increase, continue to remain below those levels.”

He noted that a rise in motor vehicle thefts was the most widespread trend across the cities they tracked — with a notable exception being Boston, which saw a 27 percent decline. Motor vehicle thefts surged by 59 percent from 2019 to 2022, and by 21 percent from 2021 to 2022, the report found. In eight cities, vehicle thefts more than doubled, including in Norfolk, Va.

Anna Harvey, a professor of politics at New York University and director of its Public Safety Lab, cautioned against drawing conclusions about nationwide trends from a small sampling of cities.

	<p>“Crime is a very local phenomenon because crime responds to local conditions. It responds to opportunity and probability of detection,” she said. “And those things are affected by: ‘What is your local police force doing? What are your local schools doing? What do local social services look like?’”</p> <p>The data on crime trends can also be complicated by the interplay between different kinds of crime. The rise in car thefts, for example, could have domino effects for other acts of burglary or violence, James Lint, a lieutenant with the San Antonio police, said.</p> <p>“Your stolen vehicle is actually a gateway to other crimes such as assaults, robberies, burglaries and homicides,” Lt. Lint said. “Oftentimes they need a stolen vehicle because they’re not going to use their own.”</p> <p>Insha Rahman, the vice president of advocacy and partnerships at the Vera Institute of Justice, a criminal justice research organization, noted that a “dominant narrative” since 2020 has been that the crime surge was driven by a loss of financial support for police because of criminal justice reform efforts.</p> <p>But police departments across the country have seen their budgets grow, she said. “Have police departments actually been defunded?” she asked. “The answer is no.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Timeline in death of Tyre Nichols
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/tyre-nichols-timeline.html
GIST	<p>The death of Tyre Nichols has provoked outrage and prompted state and federal investigations in the weeks since Mr. Nichols, a 29-year-old Black man, died after being pulled over by the police in Memphis.</p> <p>Lawyers for Mr. Nichols’s family said video footage that has yet to be publicly released shows that he was beaten by police officers for three minutes during the traffic stop. “He was a human piñata for those police officers,” one of the lawyers said. “Not only was it violent, it was savage.”</p> <p>Here is a timeline of the major events in the case:</p> <p>Jan. 7: Around 8:30 p.m., Mr. Nichols was stopped by police officers on suspicion of reckless driving near the intersection of Raines Road and Ross Road in Memphis.</p> <p>The Memphis police said in an initial statement that a “confrontation occurred” as the officers approached his vehicle and that Mr. Nichols ran away. The police said there was then “another confrontation” as officers arrested him, and that an ambulance was called after he complained of shortness of breath.</p> <p>Jan. 10: The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation announced that Mr. Nichols had “succumbed to his injuries” and died.</p> <p>Jan. 14: Mr. Nichols’s family held a memorial event and released a balloon in his honor, according to the Commercial Appeal, a Memphis newspaper. Supporters held a protest at a nearby police precinct.</p> <p>Jan. 15: The Memphis Police Department announced that internal administrative investigations were underway.</p> <p>Jan. 16: Mr. Nichols’s family retained the prominent civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who has represented the families of several Black victims of police violence, including Michael Brown, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. Mr. Crump called for Memphis police to release body camera footage of the encounter: “Nobody should ever die from a simple traffic stop — the footage is the only way to discern the true narrative of why and how that happened to Tyre.”</p> <p>Jan. 18: The U.S. Department of Justice announced that it had opened a civil rights investigation into Mr. Nichols’s death and was coordinating with the F.B.I.’s Memphis field office.</p>

Jan. 20: The Memphis Police Department said five officers had violated department policies in connection to Mr. Nichols' death, including policies governing excessive use of force, duty to intervene and duty to render aid. [All five officers were fired.](#)

Jan. 23: Mr. Nichols's family watched the body camera footage from the night of the traffic stop, but Mr. Nichols's mother was unable to watch the entire video. Lawyers for the family called the video "disgusting," likening it to the one showing how Rodney King was brutalized by Los Angeles police in 1991. "How are we here again so many years later?" they asked in [a statement](#).

Jan. 24: Preliminary findings of an autopsy commissioned by Mr. Nichols's family showed that he "suffered extensive bleeding caused by a severe beating." His family shared a photo taken before he died on Jan. 10 that showed him in a hospital bed, apparently unconscious, his face bruised and swollen.

The Memphis Fire Department announced that two employees involved in Mr. Nichols's "initial patient care" were being "[relieved of duty](#)" pending an internal investigation.

Jan. 25: The Memphis police chief, Cerelyn Davis, condemned the police officers' actions as "a failing of basic humanity" in a [video statement](#). Other Memphis police officers were still under investigation for policy violations, she said.

Noting the "significant public interest" in the release of the video, the [U.S. attorney](#) for the Western District of Tennessee also urged citizens to react in a "peaceful and non-violent way."

Jan. 26: The five fired police officers were arrested in connection with Mr. Nichols's death and [charged with second-degree murder](#), among other felony charges.

Video of the incident will be released after 6 p.m. on Friday, said Steve Mulroy, the Shelby County district attorney, as [Memphis braced](#) for what has repeatedly been described as brutal footage.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Memphis charges 5 officers 2 nd deg. murder
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/tyre-nichols-memphis-police.html
GIST	<p>MEMPHIS — Five Memphis police officers were charged on Thursday with second-degree murder for the death of Tyre Nichols, a 29-year-old Black man, after a traffic stop that escalated into what the authorities have described as a display of staggering brutality.</p> <p>The city has been bracing for more than a week for the release of video footage that officials say depicts in agonizing detail how a stop this month for suspicion of reckless driving ended with Mr. Nichols being hospitalized in critical condition on Jan. 7 and dying three days later. Civic leaders and others in Memphis have raised concerns about the reaction the footage could provoke among residents who are already anguished and outraged about Mr. Nichols's death.</p> <p>A grand jury returned indictments on Thursday against the five officers — Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley, Emmitt Martin III, Desmond Mills Jr. and Justin Smith — with charges that include kidnapping, official misconduct and official oppression, in addition to second-degree murder, prosecutors said. The officers, all of whom are Black, were fired last week.</p> <p>"The actions of all of them resulted in the death of Tyre Nichols, and they are all responsible," Steven J. Mulroy, the district attorney for Memphis, told reporters on Thursday.</p> <p>Officials have sought to assuage residents, promising an aggressive pursuit of accountability. On Thursday — 16 days after Mr. Nichols died — they offered up the charges as evidence that they were following through. "We did work quickly to expedite this investigation," Mr. Mulroy said.</p>

The city is expected to release the video on Friday evening. Officials said it would consist of nearly an hour of footage taken from police body cameras and stationary cameras, with limited redactions, such as blurring out faces of people who are not city employees. “People will be able to see the entire incident from beginning to end,” Mr. Mulroy said in an appearance on CNN.

The charges grew out of an unusually fast-moving state investigation that revealed that the officers — who were part of a specialized unit patrolling high-crime areas of the city — had used a level of force that was beyond excessive, officials said. A separate federal civil rights investigation is also underway.

“In a word, it’s absolutely appalling,” David Rausch, director of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, which led the investigation, said of what he witnessed in the footage.

“I’m shocked, I’m sickened by what I saw and what we learned through our investigation,” he added. “Let me be clear, what happened here does not reflect proper policing. This was wrong, this was criminal.”

In Memphis, a city of 628,000 where nearly two-thirds of residents are Black, the fact that all five of the fired officers are Black has added a complicated layer of pain. “I was waiting for their faces to be on TV,” said Carrie Louise Pinson, a 73-year-old resident and longtime activist, “and when I saw all Black policemen — how could you do this?”

Lawyers representing the officers said on Thursday that they had not seen the video and could not comment specifically on the allegations. Still, they urged the community to avoid rushing to judgment and challenged the portrayal of the officers as vicious and violent.

“No one out there that night intended for Tyre Nichols to die,” said William Massey, who is representing Mr. Martin.

“At this point, we don’t know what proof they have,” he added. “We do not have discovery, and we’ve not seen the video. So we’re kind of in the blind right now.”

Blake Ballin, a lawyer representing Mr. Mills, said his client was a father and family man who “could not be more upset about this entire situation.”

Mr. Nichols’s family had said earlier this week that they wanted first-degree murder charges for the officers. But Ben Crump, a civil rights lawyer representing them, said on Thursday that they considered the indictment an encouraging development.

“The news today from Memphis officials that these five officers are being held criminally accountable for their deadly and brutal actions gives us hope as we continue to push for justice for Tyre,” Mr. Crump said in a statement.

In his own statement, President Biden said that Mr. Nichols’s family deserved a “swift, full and transparent investigation into his death,” adding that violence “has no place in peaceful protests.” Mr. Biden also acknowledged that police killings “disparately” impact Black communities and called on Congress to pass a police reform bill, named in memory of George Floyd, that stalled in the Senate during his first year in office.

Mr. Nichols was stopped on the evening of Jan. 7 near the southeastern corner of the city. The officers who stopped him were part of a group of specialized officers known as the Scorpion Unit, which was created in 2021 to work in neighborhoods where crime and violence have been pervasive.

The police, in an initial statement, said that a “confrontation occurred” as the officers approached Mr. Nichols’s vehicle, and he ran away. There was then “another confrontation” as officers arrested him, the statement said. Mr. Nichols complained of shortness of breath, and an ambulance was called to take him to a hospital, officials said.

His family shared photographs of Mr. Nichols in the hospital, apparently unconscious and relying on a ventilator with his face bruised and swollen.

An independent autopsy commissioned by his family found that Mr. Nichols “suffered extensive bleeding caused by a severe beating,” according to preliminary findings released on Tuesday.

Gov. Bill Lee of Tennessee, a Republican, said in a statement that “cruel, criminal abuse of power will not be tolerated in the State of Tennessee,” and that Memphis and its Police Department “need to take a hard look at the misconduct and failure that has occurred within this unit.”

Last week, the Police Department said the five officers had been fired after a “thorough review of the circumstances surrounding this incident,” which found that they had violated department policies on excessive use of force, duty to intervene and duty to render aid.

The Memphis Fire Department has said that two of its employees who responded to the scene have also been “relieved of duty” while it conducts its own internal investigation.

The five officers who were charged all joined the department between 2017 and 2020. Other officers are also being investigated for policy violations, police officials said. Cerelyn Davis, the Memphis police chief, said that she has ordered a review of specialized groups like the Scorpion Unit.

The officers were booked into the Shelby County jail on Thursday, with bail amounts ranging between \$250,000 and \$350,000. At least three of the officers planned to post bail, their lawyers said.

In a video statement posted online on Wednesday, Ms. Davis, the police chief, said the public would see footage that was infuriating and unsettling. “This incident was heinous, reckless and inhumane,” she said, “and in the vein of transparency, when the video is released in the coming days, you will see this for yourself.”

“I expect you to feel what the Nichols family feels,” Chief Davis added. “I expect you to feel outrage in the disregard of basic human rights, as our police officers have taken an oath to do the opposite of what transpired on the video.”

Some of the first descriptions of what was recorded at the scene were shared on Monday by Mr. Nichols’s family and their lawyers after they were shown the video in private.

Mr. Nichols’s mother, RowVaughn Wells, had to stop the video when she tried to watch it. His stepfather called it horrifying. Antonio Romanucci, a lawyer for the family, said the video showed Mr. Nichols being pummeled like a “human piñata.”

“‘What did I do?’ — that was his question,” Mr. Crump said of Mr. Nichols during a Monday news conference. “‘What did I do?’”

The video showed Mr. Nichols was beaten by officers for three minutes, Mr. Romanucci said, adding that he was also pepper sprayed, shocked with a stun gun and restrained.

Mr. Nichols told the officers that he just wanted to go home, the lawyers said. His parents’ house was less than 100 yards away.

As the release of the video looms, officials, community leaders and Mr. Nichols’s family have implored residents not to let demonstrations morph into something more dangerous and destructive. “My hope is that they all remain peaceful because the last thing we need on top of this tragedy is for a protest to get out of hand,” said Ian Randolph, chairman of the Memphis N.A.A.C.P.’s political action committee.

	<p>At a vigil on Thursday night, Ms. Wells said, “If you’re here for me and Tyre, you’ll protest peacefully.”</p> <p>“We don’t tear up our cities, because we do have to live in them,” she added.</p> <p>The Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security said in a statement that it would be monitoring protests and it “stands ready to assist communities along with local, state and federal partners.”</p> <p>Mr. Nichols’s death has fueled anger with the Police Department at a moment in Memphis when tensions over violence and crime have also prompted calls to expand the force. Those frustrations were intensified last year after a kindergarten teacher was abducted on an early morning jog and then found dead, and a shooting spree by a gunman who killed four people, wounded three others and set off a manhunt across the city.</p> <p>“We just have a long way to go as a Police Department — especially a Police Department that looks a lot like what the community looks like,” said Torrey Harris, a state lawmaker.</p> <p>The Rev. Dr. Rosalyn Nichols, who leads an activist coalition in Memphis called Micah, said “there’s something inside of policing and the culture of policing that must change.”</p> <p>“We have officers who felt comfortable doing what those officers did,” said Ms. Nichols, who is not related to Tyre Nichols, “and that is deplorably unacceptable.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Richland police: shooting kills 1, injures 2
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/crime/richland-police-investigating-shooting-three-victims/293-8c3b0327-9b77-4ab7-95f7-6bed3ebd8e66
GIST	<p>RICHLAND, Wash. — Richland police are currently investigating a shooting that took place on McMurray Street on Thursday morning.</p> <p>According to police, officers responded to a report of two gunshot victims around 10:30 a.m. After arriving on scene, police located a third victim, who was confirmed dead. The suspects reportedly fled the scene and have not been contacted at this time, according to authorities.</p> <p>Medical aid was provided to the two surviving victims of the shooting before they were taken to the hospital for further treatment. At this time, McMurray Street between Wright and Mahan is closed as investigators continue to process the scene.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 King Co. robbery spike; Snoqualmie impact
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/robbery-spike-king-county-snoqualmie-suspects-possibly-involved-crime-spre/VHE5UOGSDJGP7J3FK6PIU5XH4A/
GIST	<p>Snoqualmie police say a violent robbery is now impacting the Snoqualmie Ridge community.</p> <p>Investigators believe the suspects are linked to other crimes – an attempted carjacking, and possibly other robberies all over King County.</p> <p>Police say it shows the crimes are becoming more widespread and criminals are becoming more bold.</p> <p>“The brazen activities and the violence that was shown in this robbery is very concerning,” said Captain Brian Lynch with Snoqualmie PD.</p>

People say the neighborhood is normally quiet and very safe. Lynch recalled a robbery case last year, but that was in nearby North Bend. Chevron employee Kyu Kim says he last remembers a robbery in Snoqualmie happening about a decade ago.

However, on Monday night, surveillance video shows a man walking into the Chevron with a pistol in hand.

“One guy come in, he had the red mask. Said, ‘Give me the money, give me the money!’” Kim said. He said at first the suspect wasn’t pointing the gun directly at him and he thought the suspect might’ve been joking. But then the suspect fired a shot into the ceiling.

“Then I know it’s serious,” Kim said. He admits he’s still shaken by what happened on Monday. “I’m an old man ... Wednesday a little better but when I’m coming home, a little panic again,” he said.

Where the crime happened is right across the street from the Snoqualmie Police Department.

“Times are changing. There is no place that can be considered untouchable anymore by crime,” said Lynch.

Lynch said the robbery could also be linked to other crimes. First of all, investigators say the getaway car – a black Toyota Camry – was involved in a rollover crash in Renton a few hours later. Then, the suspects tried to carjack a Good Samaritan who had pulled over to help. It’s not clear why that carjacking was not successful.

Someone in a red vehicle who appeared to know the suspects picked them up. Investigators say later that night, that same red car was involved in another robbery in Seattle.

Lynch says the suspects could also be behind other crimes.

“We’re finding there are some similarities in other robberies,” Lynch said. Now they are working with police departments from Issaquah to Seattle to Federal Way to share evidence and compare cases. They’re also working with the King County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office.

“To make sure that these cases can be proved beyond a reasonable doubt, go before a judge, and people can be held accountable,” said Casey McNerthney, a spokesperson for the KCPAO.

McNerthney says prosecutors are seeing a winter spike in robbery and attempted robbery charges, which usually peak in summer months. But in December, 37 cases were charged.

“Which is pretty significantly higher than the number in the twenties that we saw for the last three months,” McNerthney said. There were 47 robbery charges in August of 2022.

Snoqualmie police are asking for your help to take a good look at the suspect’s distinct clothing. He is described as a Hispanic or Black male, 5 feet, 7 inches tall, with a slim build. He was wearing white/black shoes with red shoelaces, long denim jean shorts, a black sweatshirt with white lettering on the chest, and a red ski mask.

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HEADLINE	01/26 Boeing pleads not guilty over MAX crashes
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/nation-world/boeing-arraignment-two-max-jet-crashes/507-a448d481-9887-48e0-963d-427ebe9402b2
GIST	FORT WORTH, Texas — Boeing pleaded not guilty Thursday to a charge that it misled regulators who approved its 737 Max, the plane that was involved in two crashes that killed 346 people.

Family members of passengers who died gave emotional testimony, calling for criminal prosecution of top Boeing officials.

The families are trying to convince a federal judge to throw out a settlement that the company reached with the federal government to avoid prosecution.

U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor took the plea from Boeing, which was represented by its chief safety officer and a bevy of lawyers, and ordered the company not to break any laws for the next year.

The judge delayed ruling on a request by the families to appoint a special monitor to examine safety issues at the aerospace giant. Boeing and the Justice Department opposed the request.

Investigations into the 2018 and 2019 crashes pointed to a flight-control system that Boeing added to the Max without telling pilots or airlines. Boeing downplayed the significance of the system, then didn't overhaul it until after the second crash.

The Justice Department investigated Boeing and settled the case in January 2021. After secret negotiations, the government agreed not to prosecute Boeing on a charge of defrauding the United States by deceiving regulators who approved the plane. In exchange, the company paid \$2.5 billion — a \$243.6 million fine, a \$500 million fund for victim compensation, and nearly \$1.8 billion to airlines whose Max jets were grounded.

The families are still stunned.

“We want to see real justice, and that has to be prosecutions for manslaughter,” said Naoise Connolly Ryan, whose husband, Mick, was killed in the second crash.

Naheed Noormohamed, who lost his father, Ameen, on the same flight, said the Justice Department had failed the families by not considering their pain.

“This is not just a failure of justice, it's a failure of humanity,” he testified.

“I'm the only voice left in my family,” said Paul Njoroge, a Kenyan-born Canadian whose wife, three small children and mother-in-law all died in the second crash.

Some relatives showed pictures of their loved ones to the Boeing team. They described empty spaces at special family events, and of the grief of going to Ethiopia to collect remains. Many of them fought back tears as they addressed the judge.

The fate of the settlement could rest with Judge O'Connor. He carved a path for the families to challenge the settlement by ruling last October that the Justice Department had violated federal law by not consulting with crime victims before what amounted to a plea deal.

Separately, the families have asked O'Connor to throw out part of the settlement that gave Boeing immunity from prosecution. That would give families more leverage to lobby the Justice Department to reverse its earlier decision and prosecute the company. The judge has not ruled on the immunity question.

Before Thursday's hearing, the families asked the judge to impose three conditions on Boeing, much as he might on any criminal defendant during an arraignment.

One — the break-no-laws directive, a standard order — was granted. However, Boeing and the Justice Department joined ranks to oppose the other two proposals: the special monitor, and the appointment of three passenger advocates who would make a public report about the company.

Paul Cassell, a lawyer for the families, said the extra oversight was needed because families don't trust the Justice Department.

	<p>Lawyers for Boeing, which is based in Arlington, Virginia, and the government countered that such steps were unnecessary because the company has been following terms of the settlement, called a deferred prosecution agreement, for two years.</p> <p>Mark Filip, a lawyer for Boeing, said the government's supervision of the agreement is “robust” and working. Another Boeing attorney, Benjamin Hatch, said representatives from the company and the Justice Department meet at least monthly: “It's very real oversight.”</p> <p>Boeing has faced civil lawsuits, congressional investigations and massive damage to its business since the crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia.</p> <p>Before each crash, an automated flight-control system called MCAS pushed the nose down based on faulty readings from a single sensor. Boeing blamed two former test pilots for misleading Federal Aviation Administration officials about the system.</p> <p>One of the test pilots is the only person prosecuted in connection with the Max. A jury in O'Connor's courtroom found him not guilty last year. Relatives of the passengers called him a scapegoat; that flaws on the Max were caused by top executives led by then-CEO Dennis Muilenburg instilling a culture of putting profit before safety.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Half Moon Bay mass shooter claims motive
SOURCE	https://www.nbcbayarea.com/news/local/half-moon-bay-shooting-suspect-interview/3140537/?_osource=SocialFlowTwt_BAYBrand
GIST	<p>Chunli Zhao, the defendant in the Half Moon Bay mass shooting that left seven people dead and one injured, admitted during a jailhouse interview Thursday with NBC Bay Area's Janelle Wang that he committed the fatal shootings.</p> <p>Zhao, who spoke with Wang in Mandarin for about 15 minutes at the San Mateo County Jail in Redwood City, also said after the shootings, he drove to the sheriff's substation to surrender.</p> <p>Zhao said he endured years of bullying combined with long hours working on the farms, and those issues were never addressed. He also said he believes he suffers from some sort of mental illness and wasn't in his right mind the day of the shootings, Wang said.</p> <p>Zhao told Wang he has been in the U.S. for 11 years and has a green card. He bought the gun used in the killings in 2021 and didn't run into any obstacles when making the purchase.</p> <p>He also expressed remorse for the killings, Wang said.</p> <p>Zhao said he has a wife he lives with in Half Moon Bay and a 40-year-old daughter who lives in China.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 US sanctions Paraguay VP, ex-president
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/us-sanctions-paraguay-vp-former-president-corruption-96695680
GIST	<p>LIMA, Peru -- The United States issued sanctions against Paraguay's former President Horacio Cartes Jara and current Vice President Hugo Velázquez Moreno on Thursday, unveiling explosive accusations that they participated in widespread schemes of corruption and have ties to members of a terrorist organization.</p> <p>Cartes and Velázquez have been involved “in systemic corruption that has undermined democratic institutions in Paraguay” and have ties to members of Hezbollah, which the United States designates as a terrorist organization, the Treasury Department said.</p>

As a result, “these two people are now blocked from using the United States financial system,” Marc Ostfield, US ambassador in Paraguay, said at a news conference.

Both Cartes and Velázquez were included on a US corruption list last year, but now the accusations against them have been expanded. Treasury also issued sanctions against four companies owned or controlled by Cartes: Tabacos USA, Bebidas USA, Dominicana Acquisition and Frigorífico Chajha.

Velázquez said he was “surprised” by the allegations against him and “categorically” rejected the claims, adding that he was unaware of the details and has asked the United States for more information.

“I absolutely don’t have ties to Hezbollah ... or any other terrorist group,” the vice president told a local radio station Thursday. He added that he had no plans to resign.

“I was elected by the Paraguayan people,” he said.

Cartes, who was president in 2013-2018, “did not immediately comment, but he rejected U.S. claims of corruption last year. “I deny and reject the content of the allegations,” Cartes wrote on Twitter in July 2022, and said he was “committed to offering all the support and primary-source information that the authorities need to clarify” anything.

The United States has long said the porous tri-border region that connects Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay is a hub for terrorism financing through money laundering of illicit activity. The U.S. has identified what it has described as members of the Hezbollah group who use front companies in the region to finance terror activities in the Middle East.

The State Department has said that corruption in Paraguay often prevents convictions in money-laundering and terrorism financing cases.

Cartes, described by the U.S. as “one of the wealthiest individuals in Paraguay,” has “engaged in a concerted pattern of corruption, including widespread bribery of government officials and legislators,” the State Department said Thursday.

The sanctions rocked Paraguay’s political world, with opposition lawmakers demanding the launch of investigations into Cartes, Velázquez and all lawmakers who may have received bribes.

In his quest to become president, Cartes repeatedly doled out cash to officials, a pattern that continued during his presidency and after he stepped down, according to U.S. officials.

They say that initially, after Cartes joined the Colorado Party in 2009, he bribed officials to persuade them to eliminate the party’s requirement that someone had to be affiliated for 10 years before running as its presidential nominee. He then proceeded to pay some members of the party as much as \$10,000 to support his candidacy, Treasury said.

While president, Cartes made monthly payments of anywhere from \$5,000 to \$50,000 to a group of “loyal legislators” in order to make sure he kept control over Congress, the U.S. said. Those payments continued after he left office to make sure lawmakers voted in his interest, Treasury said.

Overall, the former president, who still leads the Colorado Party, has “leveraged his illicitly acquired wealth and influence to expand his political and economic power over Paraguayan institutions,” the State Department said.

The accusations against Velázquez were less detailed, with Treasury saying only that the vice president “has also engaged in corrupt practices to interfere with legal processes and protect himself and criminal associates from criminal investigations,” including by bribing and threatening officials to make sure his illicit activity wasn’t exposed.

	The United States also alleges that “representatives of both Cartes and Velázquez have collected bribes” at private events held by Hezbollah in Paraguay.
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HEADLINE	01/26 NC town: razor blades gas pump handles
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2023/01/26/us/north-carolina-razor-blades-gas-pumps-trnd
GIST	<p>The Forest City Police Department in North Carolina has issued an advisory after multiple razor blades were found on gas pump handles.</p> <p>The department published the community advisory on Tuesday to address “multiple instances of razor blades being placed in gas pump handles in Forest City and surrounding areas.” It said that they are “actively investigating” the incidents in cooperation with the state Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>They advised residents to “be aware of your surroundings while pumping gas and “always check before grabbing the gas pump handle.”</p> <p>In a statement emailed to CNN, the police department specified that there have been three confirmed incidents of razor blades found on gas pump handles. The incidents occurred over the past month and were reported to the department and the sheriff’s office on Tuesday.</p> <p>“This is a very disturbing incident and we are devoting all of the resources available to us to figure out who is responsible and hold them accountable,” the department wrote in its statement.</p> <p>Forest City is located in North Carolina’s Rutherford County, in the southwest of the state, around 63 miles from Asheville. The town is home to around 7,000 residents, according to the 2020 census.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/26 Experts: Calif. ‘mass shooting contagion’
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/california-massacres-suggest-phenomenon-mass-shooting-contagion-experts/story?id=96632107
GIST	<p>Following four California mass shootings in the span of eight days that left 25 people dead and 17 injured, some gun violence researchers said they're concerned that a phenomenon known as "mass shooting contagion" is occurring across the state.</p> <p>The cluster of deadly incidents is not surprising, gun violence researchers told ABC News, saying studies have shown the probability is high that a mass shooting garnering national attention will be rapidly followed by another.</p> <p>"'Contagion' is a statistical process. It's when the likelihood of a similar crime of another mass shooting increases in the aftermath of another mass shooting. That's what 'contagion' is," James Alan Fox, a professor of criminology at Northeastern University, who led a study on the subject published in 2020, told ABC News.</p> <p>Fox said a 2015 study conducted by researchers at Arizona State University concluded that every mass shooting tends to increase the likelihood of another mass shooting for about 13 days.</p> <p>String of California massacres</p> <p>California's recent string of mass shootings began on Jan. 16, when six people, including a teenage mother and her baby, were found fatally shot at a home in Goshen, a semi-rural area in the state's San Joaquin Valley. The Tulare County Sheriff's Department, which has yet to announce any arrests, said the shooting appeared to be a targeted attack by two gunmen possibly connected to a drug cartel.</p> <p>Just five days after the Goshen killings, a 72-year-old man allegedly opened fire in a dance studio in the Los Angeles County city of Monterey Park, killing 11 people, all of Asian descent, and injuring nine others, according to law enforcement officials. The gunman, identified as Huu Can Tran, died from a self-</p>

inflicted gunshot wound after police cornered him following an intense manhunt, officials said. A motive in the shooting remains under investigation.

A day later, a 66-year-old farmworker allegedly [shot and killed seven co-workers](#), five of Asian descent and two of Hispanic descent, and injured one in what authorities said was a workplace shooting at two mushroom growing farms in Half Moon Bay. The suspect, Chunli Zhao, was charged with seven counts of murder, one count of attempted murder, firearm use enhancements and a count of special circumstance allegation of multiple murder.

Just hours after the Half Moon Bay shooting, [seven people were shot](#), one fatally, in Oakland, California, in what police described as a "targeted" and possibly gang-related attack during the filming of a music video at a gas station.

"There are mass shootings waiting to happen, so one of them can influence the other," Lori Post, director of the Buehler Center for Health Policy and Economics at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, told ABC News.

Post, who keeps a database of mass shootings dating back to 1966, added, "If a would-be shooter sees all the attention of another mass shooter, it may incentivize him to carry out his plan. But one mass shooting does not inspire a normal person to commit a massacre."

Difference between contagion, copycat killings

Fox said mass shooting contagion is very different from what law enforcement officials call "copycat shootings," when an individual attempts to mimic or copy the actions of mass shooter they may admire. Elliot Rodger, who killed six people and injured 14 in a [May 2014 rampage](#) in Isla Vista, California, near Santa Barbara, became a hero to the so-called "incel," or voluntarily celibate community after distributing a document in which he said he planned his murderous rampage as a "Day of Retribution" to exact revenge on a society that had denied him sex and love.

"There were a couple of mass shootings by incels who revered him," said Fox, adding that copycat killings can occur long after the original crime.

"The 20th anniversary of Columbine brought a number of attempts," Fox said. "Fortunately, no one succeeded."

In contagion mass shootings, Fox said, "It's not necessarily that the killer admires the previous ones."

"There are individuals who have the motivation to commit a mass killing and another crime can help precipitate it, but it doesn't cause it. It's just that they say, 'Ok, that's what I want to do too and I'll do it now,'" Fox said.

In addition to the spat of California mass shootings, Post said there have been several recent examples of the phenomenon, indicating contagion mass shootings don't have to occur in the same geographic location or even the same state if widespread publicity is spawned by the initial event.

On May 14, 2022, 18-year-old Payton Gendron [killed 10 Black people](#) at a supermarket in Buffalo, New York, in what investigators said was a racially-motivated attack he later pleaded guilty to. Ten days after the Buffalo mass shooting, 18-year-old Salvador Ramos committed a [mass shooting at Rob Elementary School](#) in Uvalde, Texas, killing 19 children and two teachers before he was killed by a police officer.

One day after an Aug. 3, 2019, mass shooting at an El Paso, Texas, Walmart, a gunman fired 41 shots in 30 seconds in a nightlife district in Dayton, Ohio, killing 9 people and wounding dozens of others before being shot and killed by police. In the final report of its investigation released in 2021, the FBI said the gunman, 24-year-old Conner Betts, had a [fascination with mass shootings](#), serial killings and murder-suicide for at least a decade.

Fox said a cluster of mass shootings can be followed by a lull in massacres, some lasting several weeks to several years.

Fox, who once served on President Bill Clinton's advisory committee on school shootings, said that from the latter half of the 1990s to March 2021, there were eight multiple victim shootings in U.S. schools, each with at least four victims and at least two deaths, prompting a tremendous amount of discussion among the public, educators and students.

"After March of 2001, we had summertime, and of course there's no school shootings in the summertime, and then we had 9/11," Fox said. "After 9/11, no-one talked about school shootings. The shift of attention went from school shootings to terrorism. Once we stopped obsessing about it, they dissipated."

Less than 1% of annual homicides

Tage S. Rai, a psychologist and an assistant professor of management at U.C. San Diego Rady School of Management, who studies violence, told ABC News that data shows mass shootings only account for less than 1% of all annual homicide deaths in the United States, yet they garner the most attention and create widespread fear that is unwarranted.

"And so what that means is we're probably not paying enough attention or giving enough resources to other kinds of gun violence that go on," Rai said. "We're not paying enough attention to violence in the home, we're not paying enough attention to suicide deaths by gun, we're not paying enough attention to a lot of other kinds of gun violence that we see."

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